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THE CARLOS TEVEZ phenomenon is complex. The story of this month's cover star is not just about how a gifted footballer has established himself as an international star, fascinating though that tale is. The life and times of "El Apache" also touch on so many of the issues facing football in the 21st century. On a basic level, Tevez is a key member of an exciting young Man United side – a team that may yet surpass the previous teams built by Alex Ferguson at Old Trafford. But on a wider scale, Tevez and his team-mates are also helping the Glazer family to make millions from a global game in which the Americans are speculators, not spectators.

It's not xenophobic or small-minded to question how the Glazers have managed to pull off one of the biggest scams in the history of the game – getting fans to pay for their takeover of the club. Anyone with the slightest concern for the future of our game should be asking the same questions.

GAVIN HAMILTON, Editor
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COVER STORY

CARLOS TEVEZ

36 **Apache's progress** Carlos Tevez has already made a remarkable journey, from the poor and violent district of Buenos Aires where he grew up to Manchester United and international renown. But, asks Tim Vickery, can he now step up from being a very good player to a true great?

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STARTER FOR TEN

Big questions of the moment

1 WILL RONALD KOEMAN LIVE TO REGRET QUITTING PSV EINDHOVEN FOR VALENCIA?
The Dutchman lost his first match in charge, at home to Rosenborg in the Champions League, six days after succeeding Quique Sanchez Flores. More, page 32.

2 DID DAVID BECKHAM HAVE A HAND IN THE APPOINTMENT OF RUUD GULLIT AS LA GALAXY COACH?
Frank Yallop resigned after Galaxy's failure to make the MLS play-offs, opening the way for a more high-profile appointment. More, page 96.

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MEGATONE
MEGATONE
7

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The much-hyped former Sevilla coach has a tough task at Tottenham. More, page 26.

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The South American champions are the clear favourites to land another world title in Japan. More, page 84.

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Muricy Ramalho's club won the Brazilian championship for the second year running, but could lose key players.

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THE BIG ISSUE

Are there too many foreigners in the English Premier League?

Yes,

says Michel Platini

"I don't like the system in which clubs scour other countries for the best young talent to bring back to their team. I want to protect the young players of 14 or 15 years of age who need to stay with their hometown clubs, with their families, and then if they go to England at the age of 20, 21, 22 it's no problem. Many will come back at the age of 16 destroyed because it was not a success."

No,

says Arsene Wenger

"I am quite amazed [by Platini's comments]. I don't understand because our purpose [at Arsenal] is to give a good life to a player who wants to become a good football player. I don't see what is wrong with that."

Yes,

says Steven Gerrard

"Something has got to happen otherwise there will be more and more foreigners and they will take over. I am sure the quotas idea won't do any harm. I am sure it will help the national team. We want as many home-grown players playing in the League as possible.

"There is a concern that the talent will stop coming through if foreigners do take over our League. We are proud to say we have one of the best leagues in the world. The most important thing is we have one of the best national teams as well, and that will only happen if we keep producing good young talent like we have done over the years.

"I am all for getting good young English players through. It has happened to myself and all the other English players. It is pointless having the best league in the world if our national team is going to suffer in the long run."

Yes,

says Steve Coppell

"Currently, it's a recipe for non-success at international level. We're the English Premier League, yet the majority of the teams at the top of the Premiership have very few English players. We must protect our identity by having a limited [minimum] number of English players."

Foreign policy...Liverpool's Javier Mascherano challenges Arsenal's Cesc Fabregas

Have your say at www.worldsoccer.com/forums

FROM THE MESSAGE BOARDS

...on coverage of the women's game

"THE SIMPLE FACT (and it really is a fact) is that the standard of play at times in the women's World Cup was poor. The main problem seemed to be the often woeful goalkeeping, exemplified by the shambolic performances of Argentina's unfortunate, hapless No 1.

"Common consensus states that Marta is currently the leading female player. Now, she is a skilful footballer for sure, but she was up against very poor opposition most of the time, and I'd be surprised if she is a better player than even an average English Championship footballer.

"Recently, the ever-politically-correct BBC has been pushing women's football coverage on its *Football Focus* programme, but I cannot help but feel that such exposure does the game more harm than good when the standard is so obviously low.

"In order for women's football to improve to a level where it can support sustained mass exposure without fear of its flaws being brutally and embarrassingly exposed, it needs improved facilities, better coaching and solid funding for a start. What it does not need is for *World Soccer* to join the patronising likes of the BBC and devote the game more limelight than it can realistically handle, and I think the magazine is spot on in limiting its coverage to a World Cup review."
Posted by "foxrocks", October 27

The best, but how good?...Brazil's Marta (left) takes on Germany's Ariane Hingst

"I'M NOT CONVINCED that the standard of the women's game is that bad, but at the same time there is no need to compare it to the men's game. Women's football is a separate entity, growing at its own rate.

"When we watch [Yelena] Isinbayeva breaking a world record in the women's pole vault, do we say 'yeah, well done, but you are not as good as [pole-vaulting great] Sergei Bubka'? Or do we just accept and praise the achievement for what it is?"
Posted by "righteous1", October 27

"I DON'T THINK the women's game needs covering. Do we get coverage of beach soccer, five-a-sides, amateur or futsal? No, because they are not important enough forms of the game, especially when you consider that your publication tries to include coverage of the entire globe."
Posted by "ranckoner", October 27

"I HAVE ABSOLUTELY no interest in the women's game. The reason for this is not due to any sexist feelings on my part, but simply a lack of free time. As it is, I struggle to keep up to date with what's happening in the professional [men's] game around the world. So, trying to cram in information about developments in the female code is just a step too far."
Posted by "Historyman", October 28

"THE IDEA THAT some of *World Soccer's* coverage should be sacrificed for what is for the vast majority of people a minority sport seems nonsensical. Even in the US, which I imagine has a sizeable player base, there would surely be little demand for a women's football magazine. Ultimately, compared to the men's game, it's a sub-standard product, and there's something patronising and tokenistic about covering a game purely because it's played by women."
Posted by "richards", October 30

"IT'S LIKE HAVING to play that really bad kid at left-back even though you don't want to, because the only way he'll learn is to play. It may be hard to watch some of the games in women's football at the moment, but I've got to say that the quality [at the World Cup] was a step up on the quality of the women's Euros.

"The only way for women's football to be seen at a greater level than it is now is to keep it out there. But it also has to come from the grassroots. Until countries like Brazil begin to treat their female players better, we can't see the game thrive."
Posted by "TECallaghan", November 1

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ESM Team of the Month

European Sports Magazines

OCTOBER

HOW IT WORKS

Every month, journalists from each member of the European Sports Magazines group vote for their first XI from Europe's top leagues. The players with most votes make the overall team of the month.

Sergio Ramos
(Real Madrid, 5 votes)
More impressive displays from the centre-back turned right-back. The £19million Madrid paid Sevilla for the youngster in summer 2005 looks like money well spent.

Rio Ferdinand
(Manchester United, 4 votes)
Once again a commanding figure in central defence for United as they became *the* team to beat, in England and Europe.

Iker Casillas
(Real Madrid, 4 votes)
Once again proved his worth to the Spanish league leaders with some outstanding displays. The £5million insurance policy on his hands now seems like a good bit of business.

Kolo Toure
(Arsenal, 3 votes)
Arsenal's longest-serving player is now the focal point of the defence and has quickly formed a solid understanding with fellow centre-back William Gallas.

Walter Samuel
(Internazionale, 3 votes)
The Wall, who had a disappointing spell with Real Madrid, is finally living up to his nickname at Inter, providing stability and solidity.

Cesc Fabregas
(Arsenal, 9 votes)
The brilliant young Spaniard has added goals to his repertoire in a sparkling first three months of the Premier League season, when he has been Arsenal's star.

Daniele De Rossi
(Roma, 4 votes)
The midfielder has been the driving force behind Roma's impressive form and was rewarded with the captain's armband for Italy's friendly against South Africa.

Lionel Messi
(Barcelona, 6 votes)
In brilliant form for his club, including a run of superb goals, prompting even more speculation that Barca will sell Ronaldinho in the January window.

Afonso Alves
(Heerenveen, 4 votes)
Got over his start-of-season strop at not being allowed to move to a bigger club by registering a Dutch league record seven goals against Heracles.

Karim Benzema
(Lyon, 6 votes)
Goals for Lyon and the French national side in the Euro 2008 qualifiers led to the teenager being hailed as the future of his country's football.

Alexander Hleb
(Arsenal, 3 votes)
One of the main reasons for Arsenal's impressive start to the season. His pace and trickery perfectly complement fellow midfielder Cesc Fabregas.

HOW THEY VOTED

A Bola (Portugal)
Casillas (Real Madrid)
Sergio Ramos (Real Madrid)
Ferdinand (Man Utd)
Alex (Chelsea)
Diaby (Arsenal)
Hleb (Arsenal)
L Gonzalez (Porto)
Nani (Man Utd)
Tevez (Man Utd)
Drogba (Chelsea)
Robinho (Real Madrid)

Don Balon (Spain)
Casillas (Real Madrid)
Zanetti (Internazionale)
Sergio Ramos (Real Madrid)
Sagna (Arsenal)
Cristiano Ronaldo (Man Utd)
Fabregas (Arsenal)
Keita (Sevilla)
Messi (Barcelona)
Drogba (Chelsea)
Afonso Alves (Heerenveen)
Benzema (Lyon)

Fanatik (Turkey)
Almunia (Arsenal)
Kompany (Hamburg)
Demichelis (Bayern Munich)
Ferdinand (Man Utd)
De Rossi (Roma)
Fabregas (Arsenal)
Messi (Barcelona)
Seedorf (Milan)
Afonso Alves (Heerenveen)
Benzema (Lyon)
Robinho (Real Madrid)

Gazzetta dello Sport (Italy)
Cech (Chelsea)
Maicon (Internazionale)
Sergio Ramos (Real Madrid)
Ferdinand (Man Utd)
Robinho (Real Madrid)
Fabregas (Arsenal)
Gerrard (Liverpool)
Malouda (Chelsea)
Messi (Barcelona)
Trezeguet (Juventus)
Benzema (Lyon)

Kicker (Germany)
Casillas (Real Madrid)
Toure (Arsenal)
Milito (Barcelona)
Samuel (Internazionale)
Ribery (Bayern Munich)
Fabregas (Arsenal)
De Rossi (Roma)
Quaresma (Porto)
Benzema (Lyon)
Drogba (Chelsea)
Rooney (Man Utd)

Sport-Express (Russia)
Cech (Chelsea)
Maicon (Internazionale)
Sergio Ramos (Real Madrid)
Chivu (Internazionale)
Fabregas (Arsenal)
Messi (Barcelona)
Vucinic (Roma)
Malouda (Chelsea)
Trezeguet (Juventus)
Benzema (Lyon)
Raul (Real Madrid)

Sport/Foot (Belgium)
Buffon (Juventus)
Metzelder (Real Madrid)
Toure (Arsenal)
Mexes (Roma)
Messi (Barcelona)
Fabregas (Arsenal)
Hleb (Arsenal)
Kaka (Milan)
Afonso Alves (Heerenveen)
Klose (Bayern Munich)
Adebayor (Arsenal)

Tips Bladet (Denmark)
Ballotta (Lazio)
Panucci (Roma)
Puyol (Barcelona)
Ferdinand (Man Utd)
Capdevila (Villarreal)
Jarolim (Hamburg)
De Rossi (Roma)
Fabregas (Arsenal)
Hleb (Arsenal)
Rooney (Man Utd)
Gilardino (Milan)

Voetbal International (Holland)
Casillas (Real Madrid)
Sergio Ramos (Real Madrid)
Lucio (Bayern Munich)
Toure (Arsenal)
Samuel (Internazionale)
De Rossi (Roma)
Fabregas (Arsenal)
Van Bommel (Bayern Munich)
Raul (Real Madrid)
Afonso Alves (Heerenveen)
Benzema (Lyon)

World Soccer (UK)
Adler (Bayer Leverkusen)
Hutton (Rangers)
Samuel (Internazionale)
Vidic (Man Utd)
Elano (Man City)
Guti (Real Madrid)
Fabregas (Arsenal)
Ze Roberto (Bayern Munich)
Messi (Barcelona)
Aguero (Atletico Madrid)
Ibrahimovic (Internazionale)

WHAT WE'VE LEARNED THIS MONTH

● Returning to Buenos Aires to coach former club Huracan has not been without its dark side for **Osvaldo Ardiles**. When he met his old Argentina and Tottenham team-mate Ricky Villa to reminisce over a coffee they were set upon by six motorcycle muggers, who wrenched the Rolex watch off each man's wrist. "That wouldn't have happened in London," Ardiles said. "But it's good to be home again, especially to be coaching back at the club where it all began for me." *(See Face To Face, page 46)*.

Turf topics...Petit and Pires

● Two former French internationals seem to have backed a winner on the horseracing circuit. **Emmanuel Petit and Robert Pires** each own a quarter of Ashkelon, which recently romped to victory in a big race at the Vichy track. It is unknown if the 1998 World Cup winners own the front or back half.

● Former Internazionale and Milan full-back **Francesco Coco** has retired but still knows how to earn a buck. Apart from his willingness to appear on TV reality shows, he also offers to turn up at your birthday party, wedding or bar mitzvah for a £7,000 fee.

● Lyon's Czech attacker **Milan Baros** likes to put his foot down in his Ferrari: he was caught doing 270km/h (162mph) on a motorway in eastern France. A local police chief revealed Baros had smashed the speeding record.

● German second division side **Carl Zeiss Jena** have come up with a novel way of luring fans through the turnstiles. All those who turned up in fancy dress at the home game against Thuringa received a free ticket for the next home fixture.

● AZ Alkmaar coach **Louis Van Gaal** watched his side beat NEC Nijmegen 4-0 from a wheelchair the day after breaking a leg and ankle during a reunion at his old sports academy. Van Gaal reportedly attempted to demonstrate a pole-vaulting technique but landed awkwardly and was ferried to hospital. But he insisted on being at the stadium for the match.

● Argentina starlet **Sergio Aguero**, in outstanding form for Atletico Madrid, has reportedly been dating Giannina Maradona, Diego's youngest daughter.

Putting his feet up...Van Gaal

Brian Glanville

...on the possible implications of the Fran Merida verdict... Tottenham's clumsiness...why rugby players are not morally superior to footballers...and the truth about Che Guevara

MICHEL PLATINI surely had a point when he deplored the practice of clubs such as Arsenal scouring the world for teenage players whom they can whip away from the clubs developing them.

The first of such cases was actually one that involved a mature player, albeit one still in his teens, Nicolas Anelka. Arsenal, you may remember, conjured the forward away from a furious Paris Saint-Germain for free, though they later in their generosity threw PSG a consolatory £500,000. Not a bad bargain when you consider that they subsequently sold Anelka to Real Madrid for over £20million.

At present, Arsenal's star of their show is unquestionably the hugely gifted and splendidly effective Cesc Fabregas, who arrived aged 16, spirited away from under the nose of his original club, Barcelona, who, as far as I know, were subsequently paid nothing.

It was all thoroughly legal and above board, whatever the moral aspects of such manoeuvres, but things may now radically change. This is because of a recent ruling in a Spanish court whereby Barcelona won £2.1m damages against another of their prodigies captured by Arsenal, Fran Merida. Now 17, the midfielder left Barcelona two years ago after no fewer than eight formative years with the club. The court decided this was a breach of contract.

Barca vice-president Ferran Soriano observed: "The ruling recognises the rights of the clubs that are educating and raising children." Merida will appeal but if he doesn't succeed, woe unto those English clubs who hope in future to sign potential foreign stars for nothing. The loophole has been that while English youngsters can turn professional at 16, Spanish players must wait till they are 18.

The next target for Barcelona are Liverpool, who last summer grabbed their 16-year-old striker Daniel Pacheco.

Setting a precedent... Barcelona won £2.1m damages against Fran Merida for breach of contract, two years after his move to Arsenal

If the Merida verdict moves Arsenal, who so often take the field without a single British player, to include more local players then all the better. Arsene Wenger did recently include a clutch of young English players in the squad he took to play a League Cup match at Sheffield United, and has promised to deploy more English youngsters in the future. But although his insistence that young English players are technically lacking may have some substance, there are surely enough exceptions to suggest that all is not lost. One such is 15-year-old John Bostock, who made such a promising debut as a substitute for Crystal Palace in a league match against Watford at the end of October.

> "If Merida's appeal doesn't succeed, woe unto those English clubs hoping in future to sign potential foreign stars for nothing"

CLUMSY is as clumsy does. What could be clumsier than the way Tottenham jettisoned Martin Jol and appointed Sevilla's Juande Ramos? First came the disingenuous barrage of misinformation – let's be polite – when, some weeks before Jol's dismissal, the then vice-chairman Paul Kemsley and an executive of the club went over to Seville to try to persuade Ramos to come, undermining Jol's position. Next, the way Ramos walked out in mid-season on a Sevilla club now intent on suing Spurs for soliciting him.

And when it came to the press conference at White Hart Lane to present Ramos, where was Spurs chairman Daniel Levy? Somewhere in the stadium but leaving the technical director, or whatever he is called, Damien Comolli, to face the flak.

Hung out to dry... Tottenham's treatment of Martin Jol left much to be desired

One doesn't know to what extent Comolli, rather than Jol, was responsible for the summer transfer policy, notably for the ludicrously excessive £16m paid to Charlton for Darren Bent when Spurs already had strikers in abundance – Robbie Keane, Dimitar Berbatov, Jermain Defoe and Mido, who was allowed to move to Middlesbrough.

"There used to be a football club here," were the bitter words attributed to Keith Burkinshaw when he was sacked by Spurs years ago, though in fact they were written for him by journalist Ken Jones. They seem just as appropriate now. It seems to be forgotten that, with better luck, Spurs would have finished last season in fourth position, meaning that they, rather than their eternal north London rivals Arsenal, would have been competing in the Champions League.

Almost concurrently with Ramos' arrival, it was announced that in the last financial year Spurs paid £950,000 to their owners, the ENIC group, the managing director of which is...Levy. That was a substantial increase on the £775,000 ENIC received the previous year. Worth every penny, I am sure.

STREAMS of mindless moralistic drivel, at soccer's expense, accompanied the death-bed revival of the English rugby team in the World Cup (a very small world, to be sure, compared with FIFA's World Cup) following their crushing 36-0 defeat by South Africa in their group game. Apparently sweeping aside an

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inadequate coach, the England players devised bruisingly ugly but effective tactics and reached the Final, when they gave those same South Africans a hard run for their money.

We were then invited to perceive the great superiority of rugby, its players and supporters over soccer. Rugby supporters didn't run riot as the England hooligans do. Rugby players respected rather than chivvied their referees. All quite true, up to a point. Soccer's immense, if excessive, popularity means that it spans all classes, and inevitably, alas, reflects the failings as well as the virtues of its society. Rugby supporters, largely middle class, are beyond doubt not only far fewer but also infinitely more restrained.

But to assert that rugby players are morally better than their soccer equivalents is specious in the extreme. The dark truth is that rugby's referees turn a blind eye to violence that would result in severe punishment on a soccer field. Gouging, elbowing, punching and kicking are part and parcel of a game in which one reads, time and again, of unpunished assaults or the official attempts to explain them away.

Note that the first expulsion of a player in a rugby international took place at Twickenham in 1924, when a referee called Freethy sent off a New Zealander called Brownlie. The New Zealanders never spoke to Freethy again. Not for another 40 years was another player expelled in an international: Colin Meads, playing in Edinburgh for New Zealand against Scotland.

How seldom one now sees the grace of a flowing three-quarter movement. And isn't the reliance on kicked penalties by Jonny Wilkinson in the last analysis a cheap way of accumulating points?

While soccer at its best can indeed be the beautiful game, rugby is all too often a scene of flailing bodies on the ground. But please remember that it was I who nicknamed the Premier League the Greed Is Good League and that I deplore what one might call the Shinawatra Syndrome.

IT'S SAD to find Cristiano Lucarelli, the Italian international striker now at Shakhtar Donetsk, still prey to the enduring myth of Che Guevara, as he told *World Soccer* last month. Surely there has been enough chapter and verse, enough irrevocable evidence, to show that this man was a ruthless killer – often with his own hands – and one who condemned countless political opponents to death. ●

QUOTES & NOTES

Who said what and why

Ref rage...Cobolli Gigli

"It's the fifth or sixth 'present' opponents have benefited from since the start of the season. We're starting to lose patience."
Juventus president Giovanni Cobolli Gigli voices his belief that referees are biased against his team after they lose at Napoli thanks to a pair of dubious penalties.

"Being the coach of a national team is not the same as being coach of a club. It's a job for someone who doesn't like working much."
Jose Mourinho rejects speculation that he might be tempted to take the England reins.

"We are the victims of an organised pillage. European clubs work with the fathers of young children to bypass the rules."
Brazilian federation president Ricardo Teixeira hits out at the increasing number of adolescent players being lured across the Atlantic.

"It was like a school team, they are not talking and not supporting. There is no life in this team."
Franz Beckenbauer delivers his verdict on the current England side.

"Usually people fall asleep when the lights go out. We, on the other hand, wake up."
Poland's hat-trick hero Ebi Smolarek says he and his team-mates were shaken out of their slumbers by a floodlight failure when 1-0 down to Kazakhstan in a Euro 2008 qualifier in Warsaw.

"Messi has to learn when to move the ball on rapidly and when to try the improbable slalom. When he does, he'll have a collection of player awards."
Barcelona legend Johan Cruyff passes on some advice to a current star.

"It's time we tried to heal the wound, and the wound is the players."
Marseille president Pape Diouf rounds on his relegation-threatened squad.

You can't please them all...Messi

HEADLINERS

People in the news...on and off the pitch

Rolland Courbis

Jail term for ex-Marseille boss but he's still free

FRANCE

Walking to work...Courbis can continue coaching Montpellier, at least for the time being

ROLLAND COURBIS, one of France's most colourful coaches, will continue to prowl the touchline at second division Montpellier despite having been sentenced to two years in jail by an appeal court in Aix-en-Provence in October for his part in illegal transfer dealings when in charge of Marseille in the late 1990s.

Courbis was originally handed a three-and-a-half-year term by a Marseille tribunal in June 2006. Now, after the Aix-en-Provence verdict, he has launched a fresh appeal, and until this is heard, which may not be until the end of the current season, he is free to carry on coaching.

"I'm happy to have been at least partially listened to," Courbis said after the appeal court ruling. "And I'm happy to be able to continue working as a manager."

The 54-year-old has received the backing of the equally controversial Montpellier president Louis Niccolin, who said: "As far as I know Rolland hasn't killed anyone, nor has he stolen an old lady's handbag."

The appeal court also reduced the sentence of former Marseille president Robert Louis-Dreyfus for his part in the scandal – from a three-year suspended jail term to 10 months suspended. Both men had a fine of £265,000 reduced to £140,000.

So, Courbis lives to fight another day, and appears to enjoy all the attention. He presents a national radio show called *Coach Courbis*, and has just published a book telling his side of the story, provocatively titled *Why Lie?*.

"So many people have said my life should have been a book. Now I've written one," Courbis said. The most interesting chapter of all, though, is perhaps still to be written.

Howard Johnson

Kaka

The Milan star speaks out after Italy's latest fan violence

ITALY

MILAN'S Brazilian star Kaka was one of the few players to put his head above the parapet and comment on the recent football-related violence in Italy (see Dispatches, page 22).

Lazio supporter Gabriele Sandri was accidentally shot dead by a policeman at a motorway service station near Arezzo, prompting violence across Italy, including at Milan's game at Atalanta. "All these acts of violence risk distancing the top players from playing in Serie A," Kaka said. "The world-class players want to play in great teams, and in Italy there are some of the most prestigious clubs in the world. But they are also looking for joy and enthusiasm."

Italy lost a number of leading names to clubs in Spain and England following last year's *Calciopoli* match-fixing scandal, and the domestic game was thrust into another bout of soul-searching following the killing of a policeman during a riot at the Catania-Palermo derby in February.

"These are all blows that hurt the football world," Kaka said. "Italy is losing credibility. The list is becoming too long."

Kaka and his Milan team-mates were forced to leave the pitch at Atalanta as fans tried to break down a barrier keeping them from the pitch. "Inside our dressing room there was a frightened silence," he said. "I tried to understand what was really happening. Everything was thrown into the air."

But the 25-year-old, who is the favourite to be voted world player of the year next month, said the Italian government needed to take action about a problem that was wider than just football.

"What blame can you give football if a motorway service area becomes the scene of guerrilla warfare?" Kaka said. "It's not the fault of football – this is a problem of the state."

John Holmesdale

Turn-off...Kaka believes Italy's football-related violence is discouraging top players from joining Serie A clubs

Double blow...Byshovets

Anatoliy Byshovets
Lokomotiv Moscow coach sacked and accused of corruption

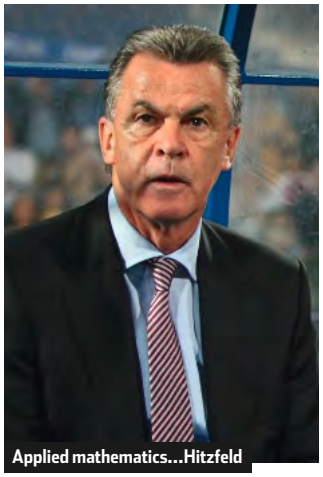
RUSSIA

VETERAN COACH Anatoliy Byshovets was sacked by Lokomotiv Moscow after the club finished a disappointing seventh in the Russian League.

Byshovets was also accused of corruption by former Lokomotiv player Dmitri Loskov, who claimed the coach demanded cash from an unnamed player in return for a guaranteed place in the team.

Loskov, who moved to the country's Saturn club at the start of the season after being frozen out by Byshovets, said: "At one point after I'd already been dropped from the team, Byshovets summoned one young player [widely believed to be Roman Kontsedalov] and said: 'You're going to be playing for the first team now. What's more, we've increased your wages. But first you need to go and see my assistant and he'll tell you what else you need to do.'

"So he goes to see him, and this is what he hears: '20 per cent of your contract and you'll be a permanent fixture in the team.' Not bad, right? The lad told them where to go and informed his agent about what had happened."


Applied mathematics...Hitzfeld

Ottmar Hitzfeld...

The Bayern Munich coach fell out with vice-president Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, who had criticised him for substituting star players Franck Ribery and Lukas Podolski during the 2-2 draw against Bolton in the UEFA Cup group stage.

"It would have been very easy to win this one and advance," Rummenigge said. "The spectators have a right to see the best team play. Football is not mathematics. You can't calculate everything."

Hitzfeld, who studied mathematics at university, hit back by saying: "I hope I know the basic maths of football and I try to apply that."

A week later Rummenigge tried to calm the waters, saying: "I am happy and Bayern should feel lucky that we have such a good friend and trainer in Ottmar Hitzfeld. I do not have a problem with Hitzfeld."

Urs Linsi...

FIFA confirmed that the former Swiss banker is to keep the £3.6million pay-off he received following his departure as the world body's general secretary in June.

Linsi, who had held the post since 2002, had negotiated a new eight-year contract worth £500,000 a year in April, and there were calls for Sebastian Coe's ethics commission to investigate the circumstances of the pay-off.

Big pay-off...Linsi

Supplementary answer...Pizarro

David Pizarro...

Roma's Chilean midfielder caused controversy when he said it was true that players are taking too many supplements to improve their performance when asked by Italian daily *Gazzetta dello Sport*.

"It happens because we play too many games and we always need to recover," Pizarro said. "You could say no, but then you stay out of the squad."

Alexei Eremenko...

The Finland striker missed his country's final European Championship qualifiers after being beaten up in Moscow and suffering a broken jaw.

Eremenko, who plays for Russian top-flight side Saturn, had been celebrating the end of the league season with team-mates when he was set upon in the street.

Broken jaw...Eremenko

"A couple of guys hit him in the face without reason," said his father, Alexei Eremenko senior, the former Dynamo Moscow and Spartak Moscow player.

Ivan Klasnic...

The Werder Bremen striker has returned to action following an 11-month lay-off while he had a kidney transplant. "I'm in good shape, I want to play as much as possible to get back into the first team as quickly as I can," said the 27-year-old Croatian, whose first appearance back was for Werder's reserves in the German Cup.

Klasnic had returned to training in September after the successful transplant of one of his father's kidneys in March. Two months earlier, his body had rejected one of his mother's kidneys.

Kidney transplant...Klasnic

Filippo Inzaghi...

The veteran Italian striker equalled Gerd Muller's European club competition record of 62 goals when scoring twice as a substitute in Milan's 3-0 Champions League victory over Shakhtar Donetsk.

Matching Muller...Inzaghi

Aleksandar Duric...

The Bosnia-born, Australia-raised striker scored twice on his international debut for Singapore in a 2-0 victory over Tajikistan in the World Cup qualifiers.

The 37-year-old, currently top scorer in Singapore's S-League, gained citizenship recently having lived in the country for seven years.

Luciano Leguizamon...

The Gimnasia y Esgrima de La Plata striker was dropped after swapping shirts with Juan Sebastian Veron of city rivals Estudiantes at the end of their Argentinian opening championship clash. Estudiantes won 1-0.

RUMOURS

Benzema for Madrid?

High price...Benzema

SPANISH daily *Marca* has claimed that Lyon's prolific young striker KARIM BENZEMA could be on his way to Real Madrid. But they will have to break the bank to get him – Lyon president Jean-Michel Aulas wants at least £42million. *Marca* also says Real want Valencia front man DAVID VILLA and that they are prepared to put £40m-plus on the table.

AS, another Spanish daily, are pushing the story that Barcelona are ready to listen to "reasonable" offers for Mexican boy wonder attacker GIOVANI DOS SANTOS. Barca are deemed to already have all the forwards they need in Thierry Henry, Samuel Eto'o, Lionel Messi, Ronaldinho and Bojan Krkic, while Giovani, it seems, has been alienating the Camp Nou powers-that-be with his diva-like behaviour. Interested parties such as Manchester United and Chelsea could seal the deal with £21m.

AS also says Barcelona are very keen to take Argentinian midfielder JAVIER MASCHERANO from Liverpool, while Atletico Madrid are said to be aiming to reinvigorate their defence with Fenerbahce's Uruguayan DIEGO LUGANO and Brazilian ALEX SILVA of Sao Paulo.

Germany's *Bild* reckons Chelsea are on the verge of making a move for Hamburg's in-form Dutch playmaker RAFAEL VAN DER VAART. It reports that the deal will be eased by the fact that Chelsea's technical director, Frank Arnesen, and Van der Vaart's agent, Soren Lerby, are good friends from their playing days together with Denmark and Ajax. Willi Schulz, the former West German central defender and member of the Hamburg board, says the price on the Dutchman's head is £28.5m.

Turin's *Tuttosport* sees a Juventus future for German international stopper PER MERTESACKER of Werder Bremen.

Gazzetta dello Sport believes Internazionale will sign Monaco's highly promising midfielder JEREMY MENEZ, who can also count Liverpool and Manchester United among his admirers.

Corriere dello Sport quotes Internazionale sports director Marco Branca saying he has a duty to track players of the calibre of FRANK LAMPARD.

France Football, meanwhile, insists Chelsea have made the decision to cash in on Lampard, and say the race for his signature is between Real Madrid, Milan and Juventus.

Portugal's *Record* suggests Sporting Lisbon captain and midfield general JOAO MOUTINHO may be tempted by the chance to play in Serie A with Fiorentina.

Nils Liedholm
Last of the Gre-No-Li trio dies at 85

SWEDEN

NILS LIEDHOLM, the last member of Sweden and Milan's legendary Gre-No-Li inside-forward trio, has died at the age of 85. Gunnar Gren died in 1991 and Gunnar Nordahl in 1995. Their fame lived on from their playing days but Liedholm was the only one of the three who followed up a great career on the pitch with success as a coach.

His influence extended right through to the present day; Liedholm was the Milan coach who gave a debut, in January 1985, to the nervous, 18-year-old son of a former team-mate who had come up through the youth ranks.

The old team-mate was Cesare Maldini – they had played together in the Milan side beaten by Real Madrid in extra-time in the 1958 European Cup Final; the son, of course, was Paolo. Maldini junior recalled: "The Mister [boss] took me aside before the game and asked me which position I would feel happiest playing. I was amazed. Of course, I picked left-back. I realised later that it was a clever trick, that he had wanted me to feel comfortable in the team, to help my self-confidence."

Liedholm, born on October 8, 1922, originally played at inside-forward, later moved back to wing-half and then, in his latter years, was a fine sweeper.

He started out with Norrkoping, winning two championship medals, then, after helping Sweden win the 1948 Olympic title from outside-left, he moved to Milan. Liedholm played 367 Serie A games between 1949 and 1961, scoring 60 goals, and won four league titles.

After the break-up of the Gre-No-Li trio, "Il Barone" established an equally creative partnership with Uruguayan Juan Schiaffino. The two men were not the best of friends off the pitch but on it they perfected a system of hand signals and body language that determined how, when and where Schiaffino wanted the ball delivered.

> **"He returned to the Sweden side aged 35 and captained them to runners-up spot at the 1958 World Cup on home soil"**

The accuracy of Liedholm's passing was legendary. One newspaper claimed he had not misplaced a pass for three games so when, in the next match, one ball went astray, the San Siro crowd gave him a standing ovation.

Liedholm would have played far more than 18 times for Sweden but for the fact that the federation chose to ignore players who had turned professional for most of the 1950s.

Flexible...inside-forward Liedholm became a fine sweeper

He was welcomed back at 35 and at the insistence of manager George Raynor to captain Sweden to runners-up spot at the 1958 World Cup finals, which they hosted.

After retiring, Liedholm stayed with Milan as a youth coach and then, some years later, took charge of the first team, leading them to the Serie A title in 1979. He won the title again with Roma in 1983. The following year, he led Roma to the European Cup Final, which they lost to Liverpool on penalties.

Liedholm remained a fan of football, but was critical of modern defenders. He said: "It's too easy to stop a player with a foul. Proper coaching should teach you to win the ball without committing a foul, though it is much more difficult. I learned that as a youngster, so I was very rarely booked or suspended."

Keir Radnedge

Compromise...Platini

Michel Platini
President backs down on cup-winners plan

UEFA

The UEFA president was forced to shelve his proposal to allow cup-winners to enter the Champions League after the idea was rejected by UEFA's strategy council, in which Europe's leading clubs have a strong input.

"You have to compromise," said Platini, who will now press ahead with plans to give six more Champions League group places to the league champions of smaller countries from 2009.

"The cup-winners idea was a personal fantasy, but we had to open the door to other reforms," he said. "Maybe we can try this idea again in three years."

Sacked...Giampaolo

Marco Giampaolo...

The Cagliari boss was one of three Serie A coaches sacked over the past month. Giampaolo was replaced by Nedo Sonetti, back for a second spell at the club. Veteran Renzo Ulivieri replaced Massimo Ficcadenti at Reggina, while Siena reappointed Mario Beretta after sacking Andrea Mandorlini.

Macauley Chrisantus...

The Nigerian starlet, top scorer at this year's Under-17 World Cup, has signed an amateur contract with Hamburg. Chrisantus will be put on a professional contract when he turns 18 next August.

The forward scored seven goals in seven games at the Under-17 event as Nigeria won the title for the third time.

Contract...Chrisantus

BLATTERWATCH Keeping tabs on the FIFA president

World affairs...Blatter visits Gordon Brown at Downing Street

IT'S BEEN A busy month for Mr Blatter. A trip to England, ostensibly to attend the 150th anniversary celebrations of Sheffield FC, enabled the FIFA president to meet prime minister Gordon Brown. After the trip to Downing Street, Blatter confirmed his support for ending FIFA's policy of rotating the World Cup around the regions.

A week later, a FIFA executive meeting formalised the decision, prompting speculation about who would bid for the 2018 finals. England was quick to declare, but Blatter declined to back its bid. "England as a country is a very solid candidate," he said during a trip to Malaysia and Thailand. "But nobody should forget China. They have a lot of stadiums, and the race remains open. There is a lot of interest and it will be a good competition."

> **"England as a country is a very solid candidate to host the 2018 World Cup. But nobody should forget China. They have a lot of stadiums, and the race remains open"**

Blatter also waded into the debate on foreign player quotas, saying: "Workers in Europe can circulate freely, but footballers are not workers. You cannot consider a footballer like any normal worker because you need 11 to play a match – and they are more artists than workers.

"Football has never had the courage to go against this practice. When you have 11 foreigners in a team, this is not good for the development of football, for the education of young players, and there is a financial aspect, too."

But Blatter's "six-plus-five" proposal (six home-grown players and five foreigners in a starting XI) brought a curt response from English Premier League spokesman Dan Johnson, who said: "It's just not legal – under EU law we couldn't do it."

Blatter was on more solid ground a few days later when, in response to the mid-season coaching changes at Chelsea, Ajax, Valencia and Sevilla, he proposed a transfer window for managers. "We will try to extend the rule that is valid for players to coaches," he said. ●

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DISPATCHES

The big stories from our worldwide network of correspondents

Breaking point

Kicking out...a supporter helps to smash the plexiglass barrier at the Atalanta-Milan game

The shooting of a Lazio fan by a policeman sparked yet another bout of football-related violence and prompted more soul-searching about the long-term problem

PADDY AGNEW
in Rome

ITALIAN FOOTBALL is once again in the dock. In the wake of the motorway service station shooting of 26-year-old Lazio fan Gabriele Sandri, some grim considerations have returned to haunt Italian football and, arguably, Italian society at large.

Before considering the implications of this latest violent outrage, it is worth recalling the events of Sunday, November 11.

The day's drama began near Arezzo in Tuscany at the Badia al Pino service station on the A1, Italy's busiest motorway and the road linking Rome and Milan. Two cars, one carrying Lazio fans and the other Juventus fans and both travelling north, had pulled into the stop at the same time, shortly after nine in the morning. The Lazio fans were travelling to Milan for the big match of the day, Internazionale v Lazio, while the other car contained Neapolitan Juventus fans travelling to see their side play at Parma.

The two sets of fans noticed each other and engaged in verbal exchanges that, apparently, soon degenerated into a scuffle. At this point, the story becomes confused. Unknown to the fans, a police car was parked across the motorway in the southbound part of the service station.

Whether summoned by radio or because they noticed the scuffle themselves, the officers decided to intervene. Luigi Spaccarotella pulled out his service revolver and fired two shots, the first one in the air, the second one perhaps aimed at the rear wheel of the Lazio fans' Renault Scenic, in the back seat of which sat Sandri.

This second shot went through the back window of the car, hitting Sandri in the neck, causing wounds from which he died shortly afterwards.

"Tragic error"

Police spokesmen subsequently described the incident as a "tragic error". It may well be that Spaccarotella did not realise that the scuffle on the other side of the motorway involved football fans. He may have been under the impression that some sort of robbery was under way.

It also seems likely that, after his first shot in the air, both sets of fans abandoned their squabble and jumped into their cars, driving away at speed. At this point, the hapless policeman, thinking that the "robbers" were attempting a quick getaway, may have attempted to fire at the back wheel of one of the two cars.

From this point on, the day's events divide into two categories. The first relate to the controversial, almost inexplicable dynamic of Sandri's killing; the second relate to the angry reaction to the killing throughout Italy.

In many cities, notably Bergamo, Milan, Parma, Rome, Taranto and Turin, so-called fans engaged in a variety of protests, some of them violent. In theory, even though the Inter-Lazio game was postponed, the "ultras" or hard-line fans were protesting about the decision to go ahead with the rest of the day's programme of matches.

True, this contrasted with the decision to suspend the entire programme after police inspector Filippo Raciti had been killed during a full-scale riot at the Catania-Palermo match in February.

But what the ultra fans conveniently chose to forget was that the Sicilian derby had been played on a Friday night, leaving plenty of time for the federation (under government pressure) to call off the games scheduled for the Saturday and Sunday. In this latest incident, there was very little time in which to call off the programme. The news and the circumstances of the shooting were not confirmed until around 1pm, by which time thousands of fans had

"Officer Spaccarotella pulled out his service revolver and fired two shots, the first one in the air, the second one perhaps aimed at the rear wheel of the Lazio fans' car. But it went through the back window, hitting Sandri in the neck"

United in grief...the scarves of many clubs create a roadside shrine to Sandri

gathered for the games with afternoon kick-offs. Aware that there could be a violent reaction but apparently convinced that it would be much worse if the games were postponed, police chief Antonio Manganelli ruled that the programme should go ahead.

This appeared to be just the excuse some of the ultras wanted. Their slogan, carried on banners in several cities, was simple: "For a dead policeman, you stop all games. For a dead fan, nothing."

The worst scenes of violence were in Bergamo, where Atalanta were playing Milan, and at the Olympic stadium in Rome, where Roma had been due to face Cagliari in the one evening Serie A game. The Atalanta and Milan ultras abandoned their normal rivalry to make a common enemy of the police. First, they caused a mini-riot outside the ground, then forced referee Massimiliano Saccani to abandon the match after just six minutes by throwing objects, including a noise bomb, on to the pitch and smashing a hole in the plexiglass barrier around the pitch.

When Atalanta players Gianpaolo Bellini and Cristiano Doni tried to talk to the ultras in an attempt to calm the situation, they were met with threats. Doni later reported that he was told that if the players kept on playing, "something serious" would happen.

The violence was even worse in Rome. Given the troubled climate, the federation, acting on police advice, had called off the Cagliari game, which had been scheduled to kick off at 8.30pm. Nonetheless, many fans turned up at the Olympic stadium to protest. For once, Roma and Lazio fans put aside their rivalry and made common ground, focusing their anger on two strategic points – the headquarters of CONI, the ruling body of Italian sport, and a nearby police station.

"For a dead policeman, you stop all games. For a dead fan, nothing"

The ultras claim the authorities have not reacted appropriately to Sandri's death

For two hours, we had scenes of urban guerrilla warfare, with cars, a police bus and rubbish bins set on fire, and the roads around the stadium shut off by improvised road blocks set up by the combined ultra forces.

By the end of the night in Rome, four ultras had been arrested, 70 policemen injured and an estimated £75,000 worth of damage done.

Significantly, at press time Rome magistrates were considering the possibility of pressing "terrorism-related" charges against those arrested.

For there's the rub. The burning question about Italian football-related violence is: Is it football's problem or society's? Is it possible that we are looking at the phenomenon of disenfranchised, alienated and (relatively) deprived groupings that have taken to focusing their frustrations on football? Is it possible that the social fabric of Italian society, while not exactly unravelling, is at least beginning to experience some serious rents?

Remember, this is a country in which organised crime represents the No 1 business, with an estimated turnover of £63billion, or 7 per cent of GDP.

It is also a country in which, just a week before the Sandri killing, introduced emergency legislation allowing for the immediate repatriation of non-nationals found guilty of serious crimes. That measure was introduced in response to a wave of public anger, engendered by the killing in Rome of an Italian woman allegedly by a Romanian immigrant. That anger was spurred by the widespread belief that immigrants, especially Romanians, are responsible for a disproportionately high amount of violent and petty crime, crime statistics that sometimes go ignored.

Sad reading

On the football front, there is no denying that in recent years the Italian game has had its winning image consistently and shamefully besmirched. On the pitch, Italian teams continue to prove themselves among the best in the world. The national side are world champions and Milan are European champions. Off the pitch, though, the story makes for much sadder reading. The deaths of Vincenzo Spagnolo (a Genoa fan stabbed before a home game against Milan in January 1995) and Sergio Ercolano (a Napoli fan killed after a fall during riots prior to an Avellino-Napoli derby in September 2003) were just the most obvious examples of a terrible creeping malaise.

Violence was on the increase, and the football authorities seemed unable to do anything about it. Three seasons ago, the situation appeared to hit an all-time low when, in the space of 13 months, three high-profile games (Lazio v Roma, Roma v Dynamo Kyiv and Inter v Milan, the latter two in the Champions League) were suspended because of fan violence.

The point of no return, however, appeared to come with the killing of police inspector Raciti. In the wake of that outrage and under pressure from the current centre-left government, the federation introduced "draconian" measures intended to stop the violence once and for all.

Security in and around stadiums was considerably tightened. Tickets can no longer be bought en masse; instead, an identity document has to be produced for each one. Computerised turnstiles were introduced, forcing some stadiums to close temporarily and others to reduce their capacity. Banners had to have official authorisation, while a measure was introduced making it possible to arrest and prosecute "fans" guilty of violent misconduct up to 48

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hours after the game in question thanks to the use of closed-circuit TV footage. Provisions were also made for the introduction of an English Premiership-style stewarding system inside the grounds by 2008.

Furthermore, the "Osservatorio", the football security intelligence unit comprising football administrators and police, was given powers to change kick-off times, to enforce a "behind closed doors" ruling, and to ban away fans from travelling if and when it deemed a match to be "high risk".

To some extent, all this seemed to be paying off. Violent incidents this season had seemed to be on the decline – fan arrests were significantly down, the overall police presence was reduced by 30 per cent and the number of policemen injured as the result of violence at games had gone down by 80 per cent. In late October, the traditionally "hot" Rome derby passed off without serious incident.

Shifting the battleground

But the seemingly positive signs were perhaps an illusion. Things might indeed have become quieter inside the stadiums but that was only because the ultras had opted to move the battleground elsewhere – to the streets and, indeed, motorway service stations.

One month before the Sandri shooting, senior policeman Mario Papa claimed that there were no fewer than 268 "politicised" groups of ultra fans in Italy, all fired by a common denominator – hatred of the police. Furthermore, Papa claimed that the majority of these groups were linked to extremist right-wing movements, a point repeated by police chief Manganelli at the time of the Sandri shooting.

Even if there may be an obvious, non-football context to this violence, football too must assume its responsibilities. Have individual clubs and the federation done enough to combat the power base of the ultras? Remember that the ultras, in return for their guaranteed support (especially at away games), have held clubs to ransom for free tickets, travel benefits and even merchandising rights.

The current, season-long tension between Lazio president Claudio Lotito and a section of the fans, who have registered their protest by boycotting home games, says much about the willingness of ultras to hold their clubs to ransom.

In such a context, it seems highly unlikely that the federation's decision to ban "away" fans and suspend the Serie B and Serie C programmes of Sunday, November 18 will resolve anything much.

Clearly, too, the saddest aspect of this whole story is that Sandri was no hooligan, rather a genuine Lazio fan caught up in a tragic mistake. Will he be the last such victim? I have my doubts. ●

Solidarity march...Inter and Lazio fans join forces on the day of Sandri's killing

Violent past: Italy's casualty list

Fallen victim...Sergio Ercolano

October 1979: Lazio fan Vincenzo Paparelli died after being hit by a missile fired during the Rome derby.

March 1982: Roma fan Andrea Vitone died after Roma supporters set fire to a train carriage following a defeat to Bologna.

September 1984: Milan fan Marco Fonghessi died after being stabbed by another Milan supporter who thought he was a Cremonese fan.

October 1988: Ascoli fan Nazzareno Filippini died eight days after being attacked by four Inter supporters.

Bloodied...Anders Frisk

January 1995: Genoa fan Vincenzo Spagnolo was stabbed to death before a home game against Milan.

June 2001: Supporter Antonio Curro was killed by a home-made bomb during a Catania-Messina tie.

September 2003: Napoli were forced to play five games behind closed doors after a fan, Sergio Ercolano, fell from the terraces and 30 policemen were injured after fighting spilled out on to the pitch during a derby at Avellino.

March 2004: A Roma-Lazio match was abandoned after supporters invaded the pitch to speak to Roma captain Francesco Totti following rumours that a young boy had been killed by a police car.

Struck down...Dida

September 2004: A Roma-Dynamo Kyiv Champions League match was abandoned after referee Anders Frisk was struck by a lighter thrown from the stands.

April 2005: Milan goalkeeper Dida was struck by a flare thrown from the crowd during a Champions League quarter-final tie against Inter. The match was abandoned.

February 2007: Policeman Filippo Raciti was killed in rioting between fans of Catania and Palermo.

Riot scene...Catania v Palermo

Strange bedfellows...but for the moment Juande Ramos (front, left) appears happy to defer to director of football Damien Comolli (front, right) over transfers

Spurs to be earned

Juande Ramos had great success at Sevilla but his new club, Tottenham, is a different challenge entirely

GABRIELE MARCOTTI
in London

SO, YOU'RE THE coach of one of the world's most admired and best-run sides, a team who have won two consecutive UEFA Cups, probably should have won the Spanish League last season and are heading for a place in this season's Champions League group stage.

True, sometimes you don't always see eye-to-eye with your extrovert president or your sage-like director of football. But you respect them both, the former for bringing the big-time back to your club, the latter for his ability to sniff out genuine talent at bargain-basement prices.

You're a bit annoyed because your contract is expiring at the end of the season and the club haven't met your demands, which means you may have to go elsewhere. But that's OK: you're going to be on the biggest stage in world football, the Champions League, and there are plenty of big clubs who could be looking for a new boss next season.

You are, in short, Juande Ramos, coach of Sevilla, in August 2007.

And then Tottenham Hotspur come along. A club who draw 6,000 fewer fans than Sevilla, a club who haven't won a league title in nearly half a century, who haven't even finished in the top four since 1990 and who, this season, have been in or just above the relegation zone.

They make you an offer. You take it. And, in normal circumstances, this is when the men in white coats would come to take you away. But that's not what happened. Because there is nothing "normal" about Ramos' circumstances. And there is certainly nothing "normal" about Spurs.

Perhaps the main reason why Ramos said "yes" is the financial package Tottenham put on the table: a reported £17.5million over four years, which makes him the highest-paid club manager in the world. It's a lot of money for a man with a grand total of zero league titles to his name, and nearly an eightfold increase on his previous salary.

And yet, while money may have been a big factor, it's too easy to call Ramos greedy, as some have done. The reality is that this is a man of 53 for whom success came late in his career. Also, the death of one of his young players, Antonio Puerta, earlier this season may have added to his belief that he should take his chances when they come along.

As for Tottenham, they have staked all their chips on Ramos, both financially and in the way they went about appointing him, following a month of denials, half-truths, covert meetings and expressions of undying loyalty to his predecessor, Martin Jol. The club were roundly criticised for their behaviour, and rightly so. In the long-term, if Ramos lives up to the billing it won't matter. Except that he does have some sizeable shoes to fill. Jol was, in statistical terms, the best manager Spurs had in more than 30 years, and also popular with the press for his low-key, forthright manner.

Those who followed Ramos' progress at Sevilla may take the line peddled by club president Jose Maria del Nido that the club is a perfect machine and almost anyone could coach the team without missing a beat. To be fair, in Monchi, Sevilla have one of the best directors of football around, and their academy has proven to be particularly fertile in recent seasons, having churned out such players as Sergio Ramos, Jose Antonio Reyes and Jesus Navas.

Comolli "the villain"

Tottenham's academy, on the other hand, hasn't produced any players of note since Ledley King. And their director of football, Frenchman Damien Comolli, has been identified by much of the English press as the villain in the Jol saga. Comolli – who, incredibly, is just 35 – keeps a very low profile in the media, but is rather more active in the transfer market. Spurs have signed 16 players since his appointment in September 2005. Throw in the 11 brought in by his short-lived predecessor, Frank Arnesen, and the new-faces total rises to a staggering 27 in just over two years, hardly a recipe for stability.

Ramos' relationship with Comolli will be crucial. The Spaniard is not accustomed to scouting and buying players, and early indications are he's happy for Comolli to maintain control over transfers, provided Ramos has an input. But it's one thing to defer to Monchi, as he did at Sevilla, quite another to put his faith in Comolli, a man 18 years his junior who has spent in excess of £20million on the quartet of Danny Murphy, Younes Kaboul, Benoit Assou-Ekotto and Didier Zokora.

Comolli, of course, isn't helped by the fact that the director of football position is relatively new to the English game. In a country where ex-professional pundits – many of whom are not the most progressive types – dominate the airwaves and the newspaper columns, the role is viewed with suspicion. The fact that Comolli is not just a foreigner but also a relative unknown doesn't help matters either.

Further complicating the issue is the peculiar position Tottenham occupy in England. As a club, they punch way above their weight in terms of media attention, perhaps because they are based in London, perhaps because there is a romantic legacy linked to their image as underachievers who play stylish football. Whatever the reason, White Hart Lane is not the kind of place where a manager can beaver away in semi-obscurity for several years, as evidenced by the fact that Ramos is their eighth full-time manager in 10 years. ●

> **"£17.5million over four years is a lot of money for a man with a grand total of zero league titles to his name"**

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Stage-managed...schoolchildren pose before Rio's Christ the Redeemer statue to celebrate FIFA's decision

Faking it

FIFA has awarded the 2014 World Cup to a Brazil that does not really exist

BRIAN HOMEWOOD
in Rio de Janeiro

FIFA'S DECISION TO grant Brazil the 2014 World Cup was greeted with a healthy dose of scepticism at home. The Zurich ceremony was broadcast live on Brazilian television, and the official video, with its standard tourist propaganda of throbbing stadiums, sun-drenched beaches, verdant jungles and carefree people, failed to impress the many Brazilians who live in a very different reality.

"The 2014 World Cup will take place in the real Brazil, not in the fake Brazil of the CBF [the national federation] and the TV Globo network," wrote Jose Geraldo Couto in the *Folha de Sao Paulo* newspaper.

The official line from the government, the CBF and the leading television networks is that the World Cup is a good thing and will provide the investments for much-needed improvements in security and infrastructure.

Brazilians seem to agree that the country has been given a unique chance, provided the politicians keep their promises. But that last phrase is the catch. Most locals are worried that the taxpayer is going to be taken for a ride.

Tostao, the 1970 World Cup-winning forward, summed it up when saying: "The biggest suspicion is that in Brazil it appears almost impossible to hold a World Cup without wasting public money. There's a generalised habit of wanting to be more cunning than cunningness itself. Brazil still needs to prove that it wants to be a serious country. The World Cup will be a good chance. I want to see the World Cup in Brazil, but without pulling a fast one."

Public reaction was muted and there was no dancing in the streets except at a handful of official events organised by local authorities. Just as a sample of public opinion, let's take the letters page from Rio de Janeiro newspaper *O Globo* on the day after the vote. The paper, which could never be described as unpatriotic, published 12 letters on the subject. Only one was out-and-out in favour of Brazil staging the tournament, four said it was a chance for the country but expressed severe reservations, and the rest were highly critical.

"This isn't the moment to host a World Cup," said Andre Luis Horta de Britto. "We've just hosted a Pan-American Games which didn't bring any benefit whatsoever to the people of Rio."

The number of politicians who went to Zurich had already set the alarm bells ringing about money being wasted – the governors of no fewer than 12 of Brazil's 27 states joined state president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, sports minister Orlando Silva, national team coach Dunga and USA 94-winning forward Romario for the jaunt.

"Somebody is being tricked and, certainly, it's us," said another of the letter writers, Luiz Eduardo Rangel. "FIFA and the CBF claim that the investments for the World Cup will come from private enterprise, with very little from the government. However, we didn't see any businessmen in Zurich, just Brazilian politicians."

The newspaper itself expressed doubts. Having greeted the decision with the headline "The Cup is ours", it added "all we need now are airports, highways, safety etc, etc".

The so-called legacy of a World Cup is cited repeatedly as one of the main benefits of hosting the tournament. Yet, if FIFA's pre-vote report on Brazil's bid is anything to go by, the country will hardly have to make any improvements at all to an infrastructure that most Brazilians feel is hugely deficient.

After spending 10 days touring the country earlier this year, FIFA's inspectors came to some astonishing conclusions. "Air and urban transport infrastructure would comfortably meet the demands of the World Cup," the report said, even though most Brazilian passengers consider either option as a complete nightmare.

Extraordinary assertion

The report also stated as fact that a Rio-to-Sao Paulo high-speed rail line, which is not even in the planning stages, would be operating by 2014, and made the quite extraordinary assertion that "public transportation in Rio de Janeiro consists principally of an extensive underground train system". In fact, Rio's metro has only two lines, and only four per cent of passenger journeys in the city are made on it. Most people are forced to use the appalling buses and, worse, "pirate" vans.

But since the inspection team travelled by helicopter and private jet, it's not surprising that they were unaware of this.

It seemed a case of the report being tailored to the final decision rather than vice-versa. Brazil were the only candidates, and although FIFA president Sepp Blatter had warned that the finals could still go elsewhere, there was little doubt about the outcome on the day.

FIFA appeared to have been won over by the Brazilian government's pledge to remove all red tape – something it steadfastly refuses to do for its own people – and by the predictable rhetoric about there being a friendly, football-mad public and the country's football traditions.

A couple of those images could be shattered if Brazil are not careful. CBF president Ricardo Teixeira went on the counter-attack when asked about Brazil's crime rate at the media conference that followed FIFA's decision. "In major cities in the US you see kids killing other kids in schools; we don't have that," he snarled. "We have seen Brazilians being killed in other countries. Our problem with violence is no bigger than, nor no less than, other parts of the world."

Also, the atmosphere at games could be a huge letdown if organisers price tickets too high for the ordinary fan. Writing for the *Folha de Sao Paulo's* online edition, Humberto Peron warned: "It's obvious Brazilians like football. But, above anything else, they like the Brazilian team. I don't know if the stadium-going Brazilian would want to watch a match between Guatemala and Ukraine. Even if he did, he would find problems with the ticket price. If Brazilians can't go to the stadiums, it's not worth holding a World Cup in Brazil." ●

"Somebody is being tricked and it's us. The federation claims investment for the World Cup will come from private enterprise. But we didn't see any businessmen in Zurich, just politicians"

A letter writer to Rio daily O Globo *protests against the award of the tournament to Brazil*

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Fighting for the cause...Nancy's Marc-Antoine Fortune has the upper hand on Marc Planus during a 1-0 win over Bordeaux

Nancy on a high

The north-easterners have been the surprise package of the Ligue 1 campaign

BY FAR THE least likely success story of the French season so far is that of Nancy. The club finished only 13th in the League last season and did not recruit a single player in the close season. Yet after 13 rounds this term, they were second, a point behind Lyon and with a game in hand. Nancy had lost just one of those games, and unluckily, 1-0 at Lens.

This has been achieved with a team devoid of household names. While Paris Saint-Germain and Marseille, who dwarf Nancy in terms of size and financial muscle, are battling to stay out of the relegation zone, the unfashionable north-easterners are a shining light for those who believe that clubs thrive on stability and long-term planning.

Pablo Correa, Nancy's Uruguayan coach, was a forward at the club between 1995 and 2000. After a short period learning the management ropes as part of Nancy's backroom staff, he took the coaching reins in November 2002 when they were struggling in the second division. It took Correa three seasons to get the club into the top flight – as second division champions in 2005 – and there followed two seasons of adjustment, when mid-table finishes were considered perfectly satisfactory.

Yet nobody outside the club anticipated Nancy suddenly exploding into life during this campaign. Indeed, in the summer most respected football pundits were asking what Correa was playing at when he opted to keep faith with the same squad that had ambled along last season and posted an unspectacular record of 13 wins, 10 draws and 15 defeats. Not only that but the club also cashed in on their best defender, Senegalese Pape Diakhate, selling him to Dynamo Kyiv.

But Nancy president Jacques Rousselot has complete faith in Correa and his right-hand man, Paul Fischer. "It was a gamble appointing Pablo," Rousselot says. "But I sensed there was something special about this little chap and he brought us out of the shadows and saved the club."

What Rousselot particularly likes about Correa is that "he's both a trainer and an administrator". These qualities were apparent when Danish club Brondby offered to sell Swedish striker Johan Elmander to Nancy in the summer of 2006. Rousselot was ready to get the chequebook out, but Correa dissuaded him. "He told me we couldn't afford to spend €4million [£2.8m]," Rousselot says with a chuckle.

Correa is apparently still kicking himself since Elmander, who signed for Toulouse in the end, has been a big success in Ligue 1. You can't get it right all the time, but it's the principle that counts. "The president often suggests players, and I know it's discouraging for him when we turn them down," Correa says. "But I don't just say no for the sake of it."

Fischer adds: "We could even say no to Ronaldinho here. I don't think he'd do us any good. He's not our kind of player."

Indeed, he isn't. Nancy are built on teamwork rather than the individual, and at times they are not pretty to watch. But the fans love the team spirit, which has to a large extent been fostered by continuity – 80 per cent of the current team have been at the club since 2003, and that is an eternity in football. "We all get on well together, and you can see that on the pitch," says defender Michael Chretien. "Everyone works for the good of the team."

The defence is particularly strong, having conceded just seven goals in 12 games, the lowest tally in the division. Ominously for lovers of the beautiful game, Correa says: "An attacker has to defend well before he can even start thinking about attacking." But what could be more beautiful than this current success for a club that were in danger of dropping out of the second division just five years ago? Besides, the attack isn't doing too badly, either; only Lyon had scored more goals.

Platini delight

Correa will not let the extraordinary start go to his head. Talk around the Stade Marcel-Picot is still about ensuring top-flight survival. But Nancy's most famous old boy, Michel Platini, who attended the club's 40th anniversary celebrations in early November, is utterly delighted that they are flying high. Whether such players as Kim, Chris Malonga, Sebastien Puygrenier and Gennaro Bracigliano will ever become as big a household name as the UEFA president is highly unlikely, but right now they are all heroes to the fans.

And how the supposed aristocrats of PSG would love to be in little Nancy's position. With the team lying in 14th place, coach Paul Le Guen grasped the bull by the horns to try to kick-start the club's season. In a game at Valenciennes, Le Guen selected a team that was quickly nicknamed The Baby-Bottle Gang.

Leaving established stars such as Pauleta, Peguy Luyindula, Pierre-Alain Frau and Sylvain Armand on the bench, the coach fielded five youngsters from the club's academy – attackers David Ngog (18) and Loris Arnaud (20), midfielders Younousse Sankhare (18) and Granddi Ngoyi (19), and defender Mamadou Sakho (17), to whom he even handed the captain's armband. PSG came away with a creditable 0-0 draw against a side unbeaten at home this season.

Next time out, admittedly with a slightly more familiar-looking side, PSG beat high-flying Strasbourg. It is too early to say whether Le Guen's massive gamble is going to pay off. But at least no one can accuse him of playing it safe in his search for a winning formula for the beleaguered club. ●

HOWARD JOHNSON in Paris

"It was a gamble appointing Pablo but I sensed there was something special about this little chap. He brought us out of the shadows and saved the club"

Nancy president Jacques Rousselot sings the praises of coach Pablo Correa

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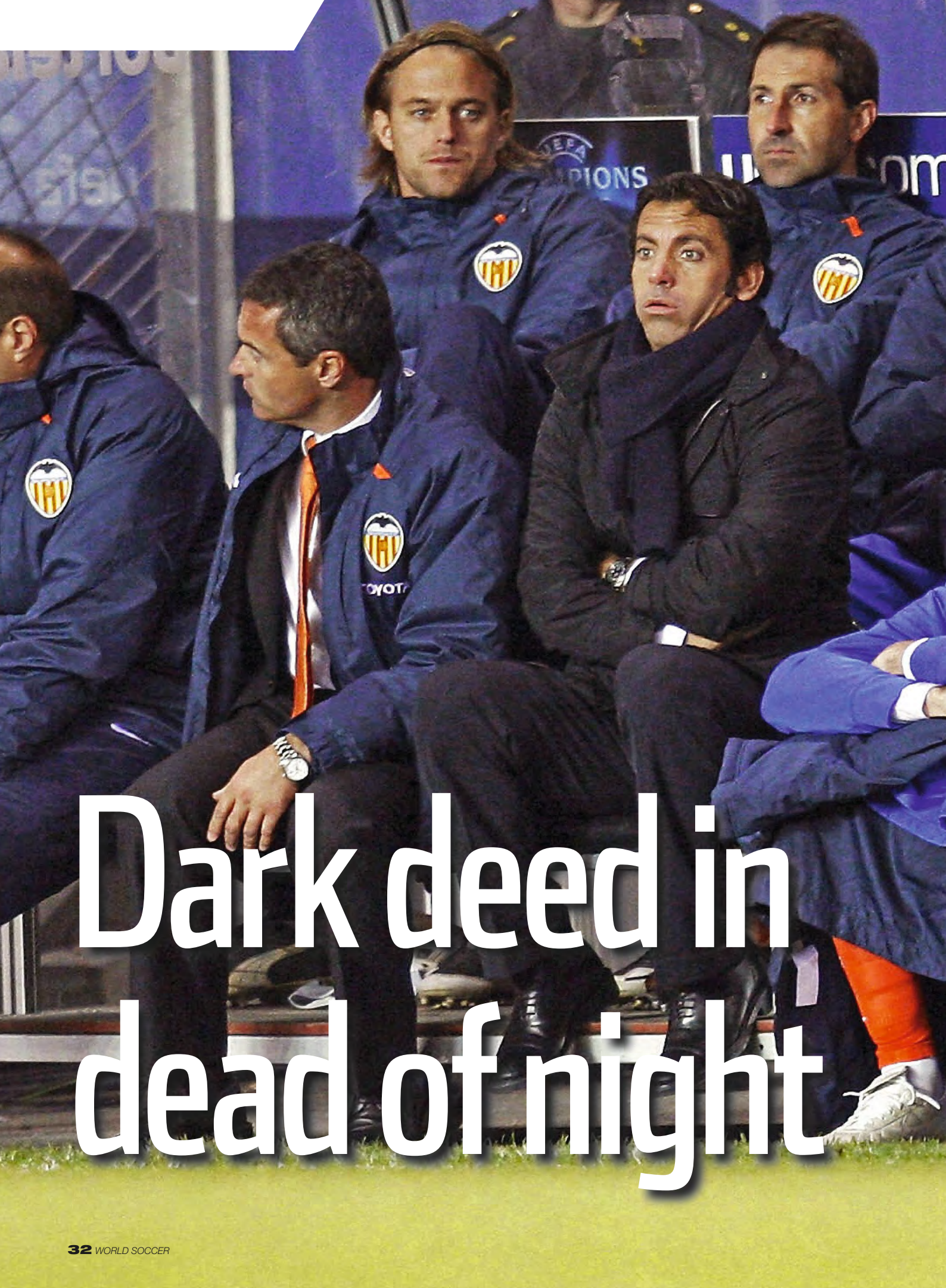

Dark deed in dead of night

The end is nigh...Sanchez Flores (wearing scarf) watches despondently as Valencia fall to Rosenborg in Trondheim in what proved to be his penultimate game in charge

Valencia's sacking of coach Quique Sanchez Flores was shabbily handled

SID LOWE
in Madrid

THE AXE FINALLY fell in the dead of night. While Quique Sanchez Flores was giving what would prove to be his last press conference in charge of Valencia – after a 3-0 defeat at Sevilla – a Valencia spokesman had strolled into the room and bluntly informed the assembled media that the board would be meeting to discuss the coach's position. Finding out through the press is one thing; Sanchez Flores had found out in front of them. When he left Sevilla's Sanchez Pizjuan stadium, head bowed, at nearly one o'clock in the morning, he knew he was a dead man walking.

At 3.40am, the Valencia directors reached agreement, and just under an hour later, at 4.24am, it was made official on the club's website: the board had decided to sack Sanchez Flores with immediate effect.

The following day, sporting director Miguel-Angel Ruiz appeared before the media to explain the decision, even though he had not been involved in taking it: Sanchez Flores' sacking was entirely down to president and major shareholder Juan Bautista Soler.

The team's defeat by Sevilla, who were playing their first game under Juande Ramos' replacement, Manolo Jimenez, had come four days after a 2-0 loss away to Rosenborg in the Champions League. Valencia's fans had been singing "Quique, go now!" for weeks. The team's football had been dull and unimaginative, despite the fact that the squad is one of the most impressive in Spain. And the coach had also lost the backing of the bulk of the dressing room; indeed, many of the players had turned against him.

Real achievement

But Sanchez Flores had taken Valencia to third and fourth place respectively in La Liga in the previous two seasons – the latter a real achievement considering the crippling injuries the squad suffered. And until the Sevilla game, Valencia had won all their away league matches this season, sat fourth in the table, just four points behind leaders Real Madrid, and still had qualification for the Champions League knockout stages in their own hands. Not only that but Real Madrid were next up at Mestalla, in three days' time, offering Valencia the chance to climb within a point of the top.

For most clubs, that would have been reason enough to stick with the coach. But for Soler, the imminence of the Madrid game made sacking Sanchez Flores – a coach he had already given up on – an even more pressing necessity.

The plan backfired spectacularly. The man put in temporary charge was Oscar Fernandez, a 33-year-old youth team coach with no experience beyond the third division. And his debut could not have been worse. Real Madrid went ahead after just 41 seconds and were 4-0 up within 37 minutes. At the final whistle, Valencia had been battered 5-1 and Mestalla was virtually empty.

Three days later, despite having presented Ronald Koeman as the new permanent coach, Fernandez was in charge again as Valencia unconvincingly won 2-0 in Mallorca. Koeman had not even travelled to the game, preferring to watch it on television. And three days after that, with Koeman in the Mestalla dugout for the first time, Valencia humiliatingly lost 2-0 to Rosenborg.

Sanchez Flores could have been forgiven for breaking

> **"For Valencia president Soler, the imminence of the Real Madrid game made sacking Sanchez Flores an even more pressing necessity"**

into a wry smile. Perhaps now people would realise that, for all his faults, he was not Valencia's biggest problem. Perhaps Soler would have done better to have sacked himself, since he had caused much of the turmoil at the club.

Sure, the fans had whistled and booed Sanchez Flores, and, yes, Valencia are a notoriously demanding club where coaches have always struggled to survive, a club with almost constant internal fights, a dressing room that has all too often turned its hand to king-making, and a long-standing tendency to hit the self-destruct button.

But a president does not have to give in to such pressure. After all, fans had also whistled Hector Cuper and Rafael Benitez but Valencia stood firm and Cuper took the club to two successive Champions League Finals, while Benitez won the league title for the first time in 31 years and added a league and UEFA Cup double two years later.

Even by Mestalla's standards, Soler's presidency has proven desperately unstable, Valencia becoming a hive of political in-fighting and bitter feuds – a model of how not to run a football club.

In the summer, Soler sacked sporting director Amedeo Carboni after it became clear that he could not work with Sanchez Flores. But if the coach thought that he had won, he had not: in return for keeping his job and Valencia shedding his nemesis, Sanchez Flores had to swallow Soler's decision to sack three friends and members of his backroom staff and promise to impose a tough new regime upon the squad.

> **"Valencia has become a hive of political in-fighting and bitter feuds – a model of how not to run a football club"**

Small wonder that the players, who had backed the coach in his battle with Carboni, accused him of crossing over to the dark side, turning against him and leaving him alone and unprotected, ripe for the sack. Small wonder that Sanchez Flores declared upon departing Mestalla that he had "lost a job but gained a life". That was just one example of Soler's divide and rule tactics, and the effects have been devastating.

Rising debt, no trophies

When Soler decided that it was time for him to ease into the presidential seat in October 2004, pushing Jaime Orti aside, Valencia had just won the league title and the UEFA Cup. Also in the five years prior to Soler's takeover, they had won another league title, a Spanish Cup, a European Super Cup and a Spanish Super Cup, while also reaching two Champions League Finals. Statistically, Valencia were the continent's third best club. In Soler's three years at the helm, Valencia's debt has risen from £85million to £185m, there have been five coaches, five sporting directors, four director generals and even three medical chiefs. But no trophies.

If there was a winner in the Sanchez Flores saga, it was Juande Ramos. He had been accused of being a mercenary for walking out on Sevilla to join Tottenham on a huge salary. But the perfect defence came just three days later with the Valencia coach's sacking. Why should coaches show loyalty to clubs who, as Sanchez Flores' shabbily-handled dismissal proved, show precious little loyalty to them? ●

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Easy pickings...Sergio Ramos is congratulated by Raul and Robinho after scoring Real Madrid's third goal in their 5-1 win at Valencia in the first game after Sanchez Flores' dismissal

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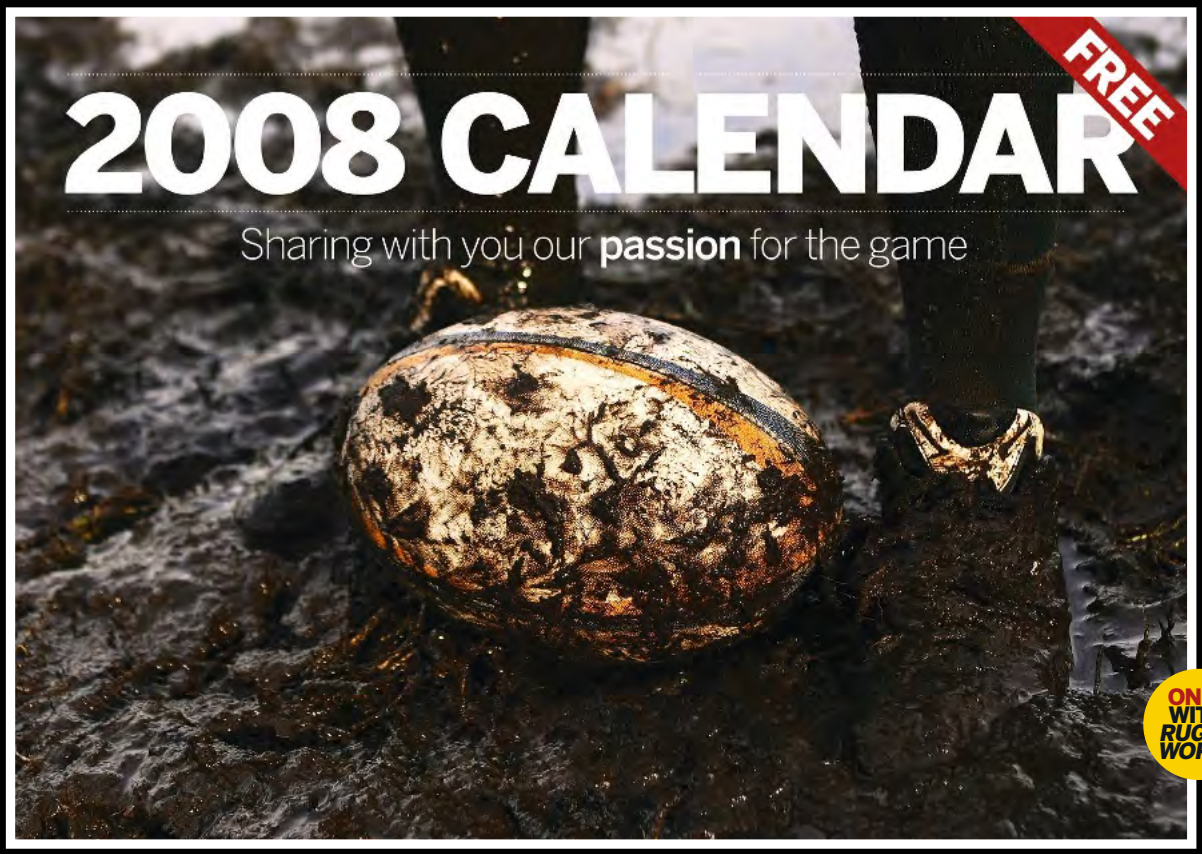

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APACHE'S PROGRESS

Carlos Tevez has already made a remarkable journey, from the poor and violent district of Buenos Aires where he grew up to Manchester United and international renown. But, asks Tim Vickery, can he now step up from being a very good player to a true great?

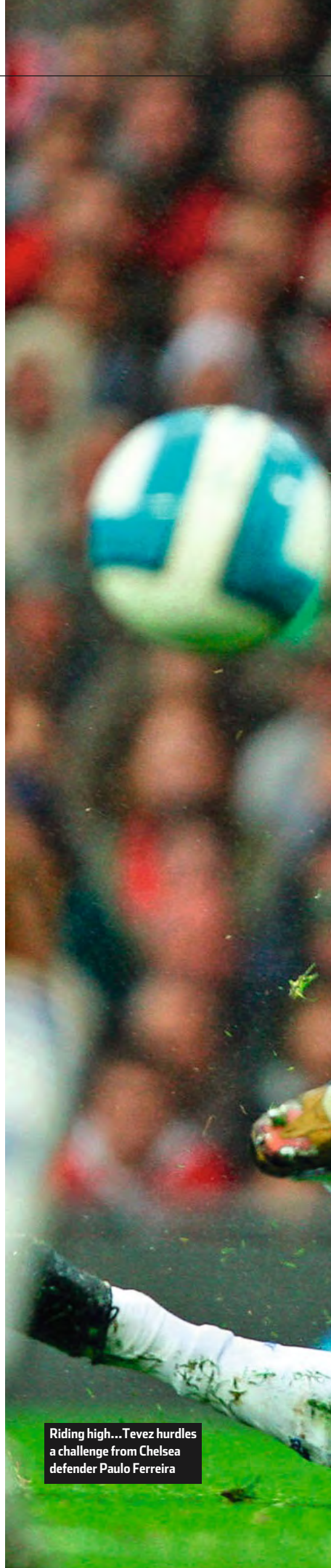
THERE IS A quick, three-step guide to explain the importance of football in South America: the game was introduced by the British and came full of First World prestige; it was re-interpreted by the locals, who transformed it into a balletic spectacle of twists and turns, ideal for those with a low centre of gravity; and this re-interpretation led to international triumphs and acclaim.

But there is another key factor. Football is the game of the city, and it hit South America just as the continent was experiencing a giddying urban explosion.

In 1880 the city of Buenos Aires took up 44 square kilometres and had a population of 305,000. Thirty years later it was four times bigger – 182sq km and 1.3 million people. And it kept growing, with immigrants pouring in from Europe, Lebanon and the countryside – all in search of a better life. Some found it, others ended up trapped in the squalid city peripheries. In these surroundings, football provided social bonds, much needed recreation, and for a lucky, gifted few, a way out.

Countless footballers around the world can trace their origins back to such neighbourhoods. But few have become as associated with their roots as Carlos Tevez. From the start of his career he was dubbed The Apache because he had grown up in a district of Buenos Aires, Ejercito de Los Andes, so violent that it is known colloquially as Fort Apache.

The link between Tevez, now 23, and his background is not one that has been made exclusively by the media. He has played an active part in the process. His rags-to-riches



Riding high...Tevez hurdles a challenge from Chelsea defender Paulo Ferreira

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story is celebrated by the band that he sings with, Piola Vago, who play a form of music called *cumbia villera* (shanty town *cumbia*), reminiscent of early US hip-hop or today's Brazilian funk, rhythmic and easy to produce, despised by polite society and which has become the contemporary soundtrack of the Buenos Aires periphery.

A lyric of the song *Pibe de Oro* (Golden Boy) runs: "He was born in a very poor neighbourhood/that became known as Fort Apache/the kid always wanted to play football/and be able to help his family," and it then goes on to celebrate Tevez's success.

Like many people who grew up in poverty, Tevez has mixed emotions about his background. At times he pays tribute to the warmth and authenticity of the people, at others he says that he would not wish it on anyone.

Wasteland kickabouts

Certainly, he is delighted that he can watch his daughter go through childhood in circumstances very different from his own. But there is no doubt – and he would never seek to deny it – that the slings and arrows that he carries on the football field come straight from Fort Apache. His skills and smartness were honed in wasteland kickabouts, where from the age of 13 he was taking on grown men.

His roots gave him the tools to become a player, and also the hunger to get the most from his gift. Tevez has dribbled round violence, powered his way past poverty and slipped the ball through the legs of lack of opportunity.

If nowadays Ejercito de Los Andes seems a long way in the past, he still bears its scars – literally. Tevez has a large mark on his neck as a result of tipping boiling water on himself as a child. Retaining the scar has been a declaration – "This is me, take me as I am." And as he has thrown himself into matches as if his very life depended on the outcome, fans wherever he has played have been delighted to do just that. One slogan in an advertising campaign sums up the relationship between Tevez and his origins: "Born in Fort Apache, loved everywhere."

When Alan Curbishley took over at West Ham towards the end of 2006, he is supposed to have said that he had no idea who Tevez was – if true, it was an astonishing admission from a coach in the league now rich enough to enlist its talent from the four corners of the globe.

Up to that point, Tevez had provided flashes of his talent in a World Cup, starred in a Copa America and been outstanding at an Olympic Games. He had won the Libertadores Cup, the World Club Cup and league championships in Argentina and Brazil, and been named Latin American player of the year an unprecedented three years running.

Twin terrors...the partnership between Tevez and Rooney has shown early signs that it will pay dividends for Manchester United

Hero...Tevez with Diego Maradona at Boca Juniors' La Bombonera stadium

> **"It became apparent that Tevez was not an attacking midfielder, he was a striker, and it was something that West Ham almost took too long to understand"**

World Soccer had picked him out as one to watch as early as September 2002, when he was included in a list of rising stars published in the Yearbook. "Broke into the Boca Juniors first team in magnificent style this year," the text read, "and with the sale of Juan Roman Riquelme to Barcelona this summer has had responsibility thrust upon him very young. A short, stocky attacking midfielder who can dribble and pass, score and create."

But it was after his position changed that his career really took off. Initially, there was a natural tendency to try to squeeze Tevez into the hole left by the loss of Riquelme. But the truth became apparent during Boca's triumphant Libertadores campaign in 2003. Tevez, as he himself pointed out, was a player whose virtues were most apparent close to the opposing goal. He was not an attacking midfielder, he was a striker, his ability to shield the

ball, to turn and surge in tight spaces, and to play quick combination passes all best used in and around the penalty area. It was something that West Ham almost took too long to understand. In the end, of course, Tevez came good and helped save the club from what had seemed an inevitable relegation, in the process earning himself a move to one of the world's biggest and most glamorous clubs.

Now, as he moves towards what should be his peak years, the big question can be posed – is Tevez going to be a very good player or a truly great one?

At international level there are clouds on the horizon. For years to come Argentina's attack is likely to be formed by Lionel Messi plus one. In October's opening two World Cup qualifiers, the chemistry between Messi and Tevez was not apparent, and there is fierce competition – from Hernan Crespo as a more traditional target man, and the fast-emerging and fantastically talented Sergio Aguero as a direct swap.

Battling...Tevez must fight for his Argentina place

At Manchester United doubts have been raised that Tevez and Wayne Rooney are too similar. This ignores one of the age-old lessons of football – that top players can usually find a common denominator – and the early signs promise an excellent on-field relationship between the two. But the months ahead may reveal the need for a striker who offers more in the air, or one who is more proficient at getting on the end of balls struck across the face of the goal. Judgement, then, should be deferred until the evidence of the business end of the season.

Everyone knows where Carlos Tevez is from. What remains to be discovered is how far he can go.

Tevez: life and times

Tops...Libertadores Cup winner

FEBRUARY 5, 1984
Born in Buenos Aires.

OCTOBER 21, 2001
Makes debut for Boca Juniors, with whom he goes on to win Argentina's opening championship in 2003, the Libertadores Cup and World Club Cup the same year, and the Sudamericana Cup in 2004.

DECEMBER 2003
Voted Latin American player of the year, an award he also takes in the following two years.

JULY 2004
Stars as Argentina win the Athens Olympics football tournament.

DECEMBER 2004
Leaves Boca for Corinthians in a deal worth £10.5million, a record between South American clubs.

2005
Stars for Corinthians as they win the Brazilian national championship.

AUGUST 31, 2006
Signs for West Ham, along with Argentina and Corinthians team-mate Javier Mascherano, in a controversial deal. Later, it emerges that West Ham were the only club prepared to accept the terms of investment of the Media Sports Investments company, which owns Tevez's contract.

MAY 13, 2007
Scores the only goal of the game against Manchester United at Old Trafford to save West Ham from relegation. Later voted West Ham's player of the season.

JULY-AUGUST 2007
Tevez agrees personal terms with Manchester United, but West Ham refuse to release his registration. MSI threaten West Ham with legal action but eventually agree to pay the Hammers £2million in compensation as Tevez agrees a two-year loan deal at Old Trafford.

Garlanded...Olympic champion

Saviour...Tevez scores West Ham's winner at Old Trafford, which kept them in the Premier League

'I feel at home in England'

The forward on Fergie, physical football and playing with Rooney

YOU SCORED your first goal for Manchester United against Chelsea, one of the biggest games of the season. How did it feel for you?
It was great. I always like to appear in the big games, and for a player like me it's always important to score. Sometimes you don't get the chance to do that, and you feel frustrated because you know that you've done everything you could have done. That has already happened to me a few times at Manchester United, but I trust in myself and in my team-mates. I was very happy for myself, of course, but also for various people who had been made to suffer a bit [because of United's poor start to the season]. The most important thing about getting my first goal was it meant that those people who had placed a lot of faith in me by bringing me here in the first place were able to relax a bit. I was always calm myself, but some other people were under pressure for me to perform.

Will Jose Mourinho's departure mean Chelsea are going to be less of a threat this season?
I don't think that anything will change just because their coach has left. Clubs of that stature don't just rely on one person for success, they have an entire structure in place. They will remain as important a force as they have been until now.

How do you see the Premier League race unfolding? Can United can retain the title?
Manchester United are like Boca Juniors and River Plate in Argentina: they are obliged to fight for the title, and if they don't win it, it is considered a bad season. I think United are the main candidates to win the League, followed by Arsenal and Chelsea. These three teams are the most powerful in England.

How are you finding the physical side of the English game? Do your opponents try to intimidate you physically?
I started to notice that already when I was at West Ham. My time there helped me to understand better how the game is played in England. I was also able to benefit from a proper pre-season this summer, so I am now used to everything. Nobody is going to make me scared. If I didn't get scared when I played football as a kid in Fort Apache, where there was broken glass on the ground and where I played against guys who were all bigger than me, I am not going to get scared in this league, which has the best pitches and the best referees.

Are you now completely into the rhythm and style of the game here? Have you had to modify your natural way of playing?
Yes, I feel I have now fully adapted to English football. I didn't have to modify anything really. All I needed to do was to learn to use my body strength a bit more against an opposition player.

What are your impressions of Alex Ferguson as a coach? Can he improve you as a player?
He, more than anyone else, was the person who was determined that I should come to Manchester United. I have the feeling that he will always stand up for me in the face of any negative comment or criticism directed at me, and that is always very important for a player. As far as I can see, he works in the same way with all his players. He provides me with tactical advice and information, but beyond that he just allows me to play the way I know best.

Are you being asked to play a different role from the one you had at West Ham?
There's maybe a slight difference. Mr Ferguson gives me more freedom up front, although how I play sometimes depends on the team we are playing. I am used to dropping back a few metres to help the midfielders, something I have done at Boca, Corinthians and with Argentina. At West Ham it was a bit different because I was often asked to operate as a playmaker.

You have had your first taste of the Champions League. Is it living up to expectations?
Yes, everything is just as I had imagined it before I came to Europe. It's great to be involved in a competition like this.

Some people have suggested that you and Wayne Rooney are too similar to play effectively together up front. Do you agree?
Not at all. Everyone has seen recently that we can play together without any problems, and the longer we are together and the better we get to understand each other, the more damage we will do to other teams. Between us, we can hurt any team.

Do you enjoy playing with Cristiano Ronaldo?
Oh yes, definitely. He is very skilful and intelligent, and he is also very quick.

How does he compare with other creative players you have played with or against?
I would say he shares certain qualities with Zidane and Riquelme. But he is also very brave with the ball at his feet. It's always a delight to play with him, because you know that he is always going to give you the ball exactly where you want it.

Your move to Old Trafford from West Ham was protracted. Were you ever in any doubt that it would go through, and if it hadn't, what would you have done?
I don't know what I would have done. Thank God everything got sorted out in the end. I never thought that it wasn't going to happen because I was told all the time that it was going to be resolved. Obviously there were times when my mind started to race a bit, but I always tried not to think too far ahead.

You have never hidden the fact that your heart lies with Boca Juniors. Are you able to follow their progress?
I am lucky enough to be able to watch Boca's games every Sunday from my home in Manchester. The team are not going through a very good period at the moment, which is difficult to watch. When I see them play, I wish I could do something to help them.

Is a return to Boca a possibility?
Not at the moment, but it's something that could happen in four or five years. I want to make sure that when I do go back I am still in good shape. I don't want to leave it until I am fat and unable to move.

Discuss this at worldsoccer.com/forums

Do you socialise with the other players?
Not much, since I try to spend as much time as possible with my family. Things are not the same as in South America. Here, everyone does their job then goes home.

What about Javier Mascherano? You're both in the north-west now.
We're always on the phone to each other.

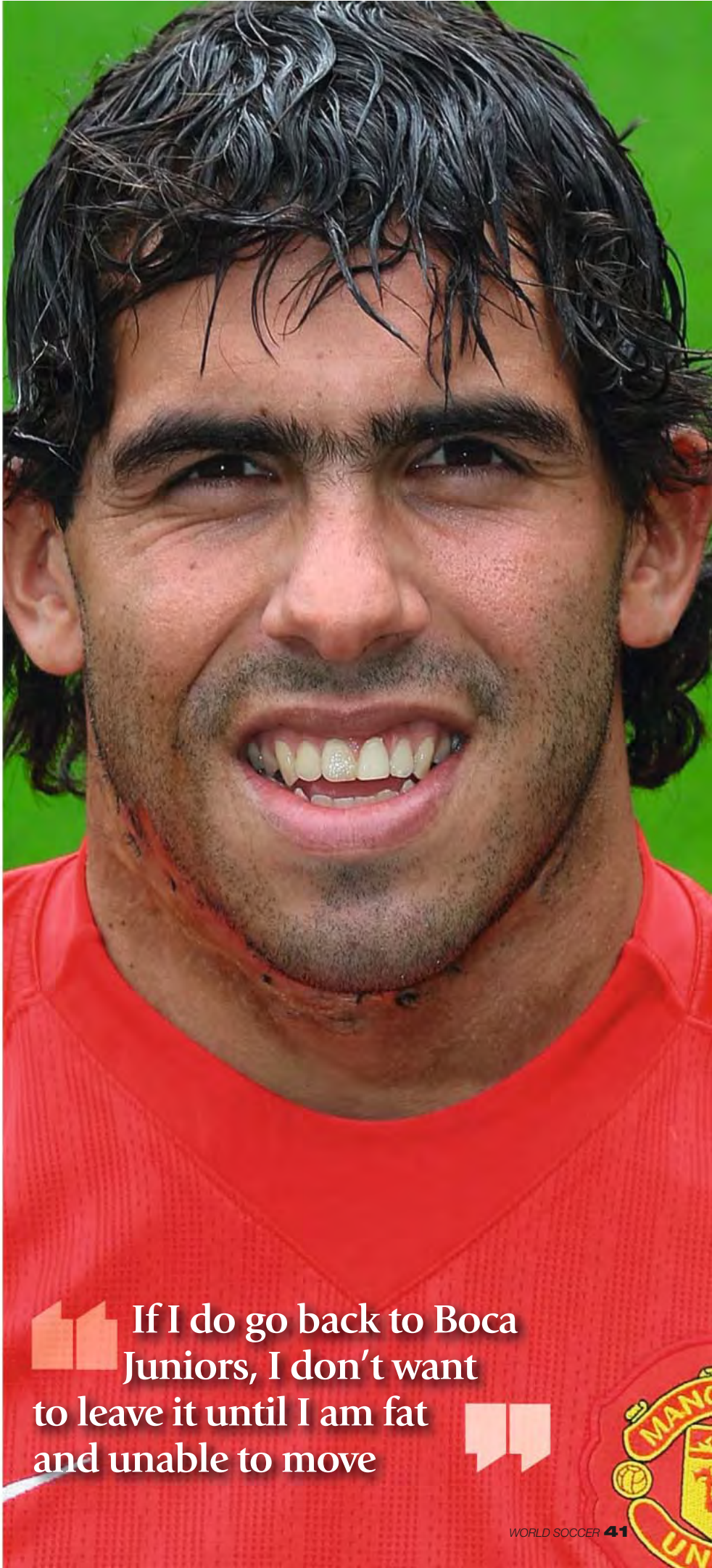
Diego Maradona has said he plans to come to England to see you play.
I hope he does. If he watches us at Old Trafford it's going to be a real revolution.

He recently said he regards you like a son and that you remind him of himself when he was your age. Is the comparison justified?
I know he cares a lot about me and, of course, I am proud every time I hear him saying kind things about me. It's the same when Riquelme talks about me. All three of us are true Boca supporters and we all love football. I can't play in them any more now, but for a long time I used to wear a pair of boots that Riquelme gave me just before I made my debut for Boca, when he was about to be transferred to Barcelona.

Are you in regular contact with Maradona? Does he give you advice?
I spoke to him a lot when I moved to Corinthians from Boca Juniors, and he gave me lots of advice then. That was such a big transfer that many things were said about me in the media, and I also went through some bad stuff with the paparazzi, I came in for a lot of criticism after I started to go out with an Argentinian model. Diego used to call me frequently to advise me on how best to handle all of that.

You are currently involved in the making of a movie about your life. How is that going?
The movie [directed by famous Argentinian actor Gaston Pauls] is going to be great. I am not doing much for it yet, because the stuff being shot at the moment are the scenes about my childhood. I would like the film to be seen all over the world if possible. I would be proud to show everyone what it is like in Tevez's world.

Interview by Dan Brennan



"If I do go back to Boca Juniors, I don't want to leave it until I am fat and unable to move"

Manchester United are creating an exciting side, with Carlos Tevez an integral part. But, says David Conn, the fans are being stung in order to service the debt forced on to the club when the Glazers took over

ON THE FACE of it, things could hardly be better at Old Trafford. Sir Alex Ferguson is well on his way to building the third great side of his 21-year tenure at Manchester United, and the predictions of financial doom when the Glazer family bought the club in 2005 appear to have been unfounded. Yet while Carlos Tevez, Wayne Rooney and Cristiano Ronaldo dazzle on the pitch, it remains true that the Glazers did saddle the club with a mountain of debt, and fans are bitterly resentful of the rise in ticket prices imposed to help pay it off.

In the spring of 2005, when it became clear that an obscure, almost reclusive family in Florida had become serious about mounting a takeover of United, fans protested, the club's then directors made clear their objections, and impartial observers scratched their heads. If, as it did turn out, the Glazers were to spend a huge lump of money, £810million, buying United, and if, as it also turned out, they were going to have to borrow £540m of that, and if, as the fans warned and which again came to pass, the family were planning to load that debt on to the club, what masterplan did they have to hugely increase revenue to pay it all back?

United were famed as the richest and most aggressively commercial club in the world, the plc that had embodied and partly invented English football's moneyed revolution. At the expanded Old Trafford stadium, ringed by megastore and superstore, ticket prices had climbed relentlessly, although not to the heights of the top London grounds. Roy Keane had had his little crack at the prawn sandwich pickers who had replaced United's pie-munchers – and the club, blessed by the glittering success of Ferguson's teams, made more money than any other club. In the 11 months to June 2005, United made £159,374, a £33m operating profit, and had £65m in the bank, while most other clubs, including Chelsea and Arsenal, were heavily in debt.

That was why United's directors made their outspoken, ultimately futile plea to the Glazers not to take over the club. The board was proud of its management for creating a club of great strength while not completely overcharging fans, and believed that the debt and interest with which the Glazers would load the club would put "significant financial strain on the business", to quote the directors' public statement of April 2005.

A month later, the board lost as the Glazers bought United. For most people, the deal was an introduction to the startling mechanics of leveraged buy-ins, a feature of the US business world. Many United fans still cannot believe it is even legal that businessmen can borrow vast amounts of money to buy a company, then load the company with those borrowings. United's campaigning fans had been right: the club had gone from having money in the bank to owing, as it turned out, £663m, to banks and financial institutions, including hedge funds. Interest last year was running at £62m, and, as it is tied to national bank lending rates which have increased, it is estimated to have risen to £76m for 2007.

There was, though, some mystique about the Glazers. They were the first US owners of a major English football club, and the fact

> **"Some supporters might not be able to afford to go to cup games, yet now around £300 more outlay has been forced on them. Many fans loyal for 20, 30 or 40 years have finally been priced out"**
>
> *Sean Bones, of the United Supporters Trust, condemns the compulsory cup match ticket scheme introduced by the club*

that they own the Tampa Bay Buccaneers NFL franchise led some to wonder whether the family had some commercial magic to introduce at United. Perhaps there was some element the English directors and chief executive David Gill had missed that could be swiftly accessed to make United yet more money, in particular from the club's and the Premier League's global appeal.

But rather than garnering fortunes from the club's followers in Singapore and Shanghai, the Glazers looked seriously instead at those assembled in Stretford, Manchester, to see how much more could be made out of them.

For all the hype about brands, media and merchandising, United's matchday income, from tickets, car parking, food and drink, is a very strong proportion of the club's earnings, especially given Old Trafford's expansion to a 76,000 capacity. A business plan leaked to *The Times* projected ticket price rises of 54 per cent over five years, but the increase is already close to that after only two.

Season tickets for this season increased by up to 14 per cent, ranging from £475 in the lower sections behind the goals to £836 for the best, halfway-line seats.

Yet more resented than the price increases is a new measure: the automatic cup ticket scheme. Previously, as is still the case at other clubs, season tickets have not included entry to cup matches, only the right to buy a ticket. But United decided they would make it compulsory for season ticket holders to purchase a ticket for every cup match, billing supporters whether they want the tickets or not. Many fans see it as yet another rip-off.

"Some might not be able to go to a cup game, or decide not to for whatever reason, including that they cannot afford it," says Sean Bones of the Manchester United Supporters Trust. "Yet now around £300 more [outlay] has been forced on them. We believe it is all about meeting the huge debts loaded on to the club by the Glazers."

United never quite explained why they had decided to introduce the compulsory scheme. Club spokesman Phil Townsend, a lifelong fan himself, pointed out that many season ticket holders already opted to buy all tickets, and he defended the price increases, saying United still provide good value for top-class football, with the lowest match ticket prices at £25, and half-price for under-16s. He also said, as Gill has recently, that United's debts are manageable – which they will be as long as the club keeps making vast profits.

Phenomenal fan base

But the suspicion lingers that the automatic cup scheme was introduced solely to make more money from United's phenomenal home fan base. The Glazers have been trying to refinance their borrowings, but have been unable to do so thus far. Now they can approach financial institutions with guaranteed full houses for every cup, as well as league, match.

The perceived unfairness of the automatic cup scheme became clear when United played second level Coventry in the League Cup second round in September. The ticket scheme meant there was a 74,000 crowd. However, Ferguson did not alter his usual policy of using the competition as a run-out for promising reserves. Coventry were well up for their big night at Old Trafford, and the United fans, glumly watching a match they had been forced to pay for, saw their team fall to a 2-0 defeat.

In spirit, even as United eased into wonderful form again, the scheme feels wrong. And many fans have said that it is this, finally, that has put attending games beyond their means. Bones says: "Many fans loyal for 20, 30 or 40 years, who helped make the club what it is, have finally been priced out." For the first time in a generation, a few season tickets were available even into October; the waiting list had melted away.

The club won the championship last season and, so far, have managed to pay the interest on their debts while still fielding a top side. But few fans believe the Glazers have brought anything to their club except £660m of debt, repeated ticket price rises, an automatic cup scheme – and a transatlantic, remote style of ownership, which Ferguson, for one, seems to be enjoying. ●

Oh, brothers...Bryan, Avram and Joel Glazer chat before a home game at their debt-laden club

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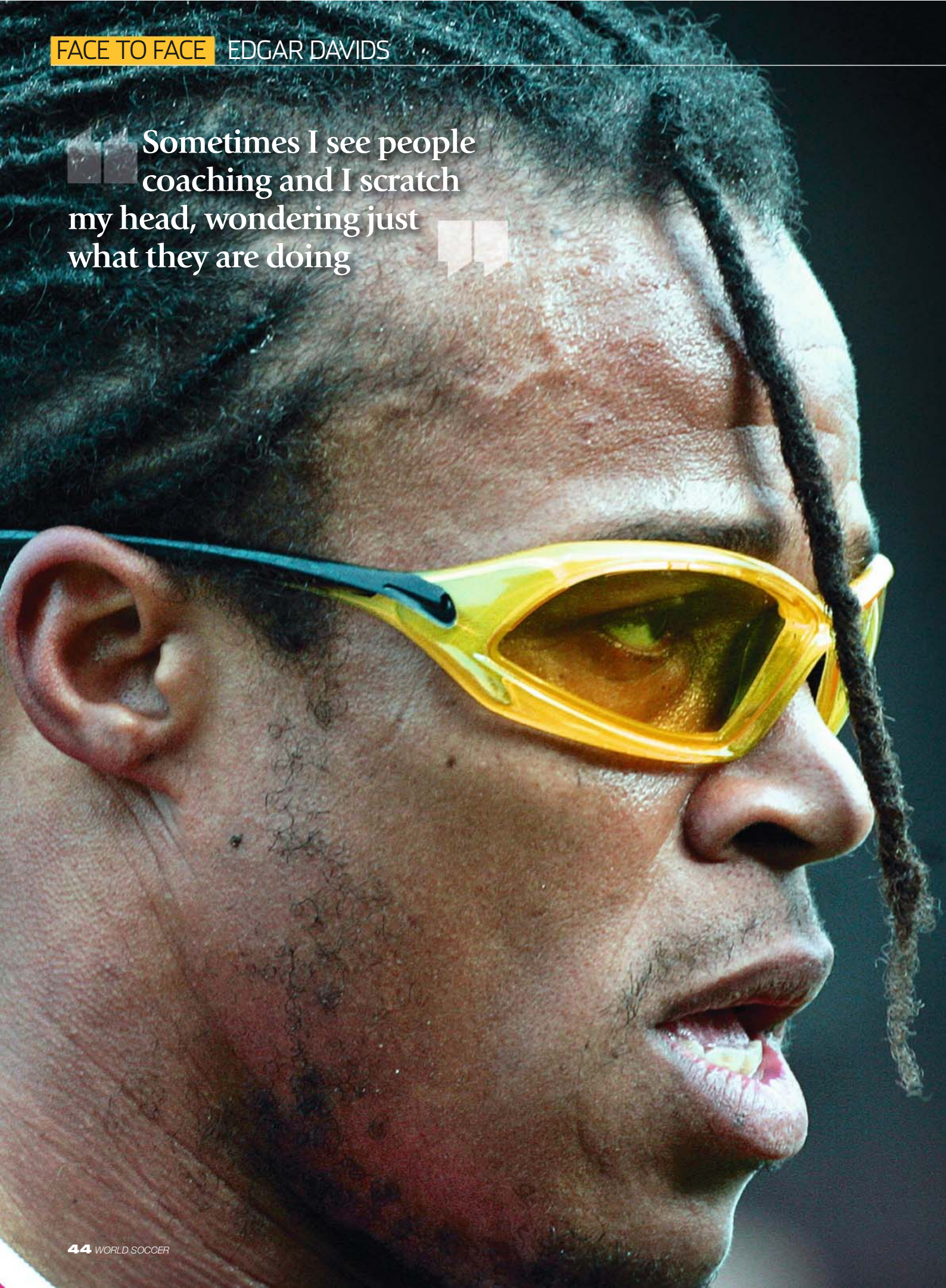


> Sometimes I see people coaching and I scratch my head, wondering just what they are doing

My way

The veteran Dutch midfielder on Henk Ten Cate, Ajax and a possible future as a coach

YOU WERE AT Tottenham for two seasons before your return to Ajax this summer. How does the Premier League differ from the Dutch League?
In Holland it's almost impossible for a team like Ajax to lose to a team at the bottom, even if they play really badly. But in England when you play against a team at the bottom you know it's not going to be easy, you're not going to win 7-0. Every game is a battle, and that's what makes it exciting.

Ajax surprisingly lost to Dinamo Zagreb in the UEFA Cup first round. Were you too relaxed about the tie?
It's possible that we didn't take Dinamo seriously enough, but we also had two or three key players missing and it is very difficult to adjust in a short time frame to having those players out. Things have changed because now we have a new coach [Adrie Koster, replacing Henk Ten Cate, now at Chelsea] and he has some different ways of doing things.

What is Henk Ten Cate like?
It's very refreshing to work for him. He has an eye for every detail and wants to play attractive football. He has a very expansive vision. He was maybe 25 per cent responsible for the way Barcelona played [when assistant to Frank Rijkaard]. Rijkaard was also responsible for 25 per cent and the players for the other 50 per cent. He had a really big influence on the team and he is a big personality.

Were you surprised by his appointment as assistant to Avram Grant at Chelsea?
No. He is a top coach who has won the Champions League and was coach at Ajax. You can trust him to do a good job. He will make Chelsea a more exciting team. I don't want to take anything away from Jose Mourinho but they are different.

There seems to be dissatisfaction in Holland with the national team.
Every coach has his own methods, and if Marco Van Basten thinks Holland can be European champions playing the way they are then that is his opinion. Everybody in Holland wants to see attractive and efficient football, and we haven't seen that much lately. But he is the coach and has total responsibility. He has his own way of working, and if he is successful he will be proved right and everyone will copy that. Look at Italy. They have been successful playing in that way.

Will you go into coaching when you finish your playing career?
It is possible if the right opportunity comes along. Right now I am focusing only on getting fit and trying to have some success with Ajax but in the future I don't see why not. Sometimes I see people coaching and I scratch my head, wondering what they are doing. So maybe I could be a success. I would have a certain way of how I want to play and how I want to structure the organisation, because I have seen that at big clubs. I have seen managers who have been doing well but because of the pressure placed on them by the club and the fans they don't have the chance to finish the whole process. Some teams need more discipline and structure, but at other times you maybe need to give the players more space and guide them. Also, you can't force a coach on to a team, because it's very difficult when your back is against the wall as a team and the club brings in a new coach. Sometimes clubs bring in a big-name coach for the sake of the fans, who want success, but that is not necessarily the best move long-term.

You played with Frank Rijkaard. Did you think he would become a successful coach?
I didn't think Rijkaard would be a great coach because he was not interested in it but he is very smart, very good at developing training methods and he has surrounded himself with the right people. He is also an excellent man-manager. You can't underestimate that quality. In normal society, in big corporations, that is a key part of management. So it should be in football.

Will we ever again see a young team with lots of home-grown players win the Champions League, as Ajax did in 1995?
It's hard to do that. On the one hand you have to give young players the time and space to develop and make sure you produce your own talents for the sake of the national team, but on the other hand, because there are so many talented foreigners, you create pressure at a higher level for them to compete. At Ajax it has always been the case that they produce great young players who move on. But that's not a problem because they will develop into better players and that will be good for the national team. When they leave, they create a space for another good youngster to come through.

Do Arsenal remind you of the Ajax '95 team?
Well, they're similar in that they have a lot of young players who have grown up together. They are young, inexperienced and play without fear, and that's a little bit like the way we were. They have top players, you can't deny that. We were talented youngsters, but they are already household names. Whether or not you are an Arsenal fan, you cannot deny at the moment that they are playing football the way you would like every team to play.

Do you wish you had done anything differently in your career?
I have no regrets. I had great experiences everywhere I've played and that has helped me to develop my character and has made me the person I am today. I played against the best players in the world in England, Italy and Spain and I think I can say I stood my ground and didn't embarrass myself. ●

Interview by Ian Cruise

More interviews at worldsoccer.com/interviews

Globetrotter

The former Argentina star reflects on life as a coach in Japan, Croatia, Saudi Arabia, Israel and now back at Huracan, where he was a player

HURACAN spent all last season fighting to avoid relegation. Why have you gone back to work there?
Basically because this was my club before we won the World Cup for the first time and I left for English football, and they asked me to help. How times have changed! In 1978 Huracan were one of the top clubs in Argentina, with six players in the national squad. But in the last three years they have had to fight their way back out of the second division, and a place in mid-table in the top flight would be dreamland. But I liked the idea of the challenge so I came back from London. It's not so different. In England and Argentina promoted clubs find it very tough trying to hold on to a place in the top division.

But in England you had your home, your family and security.
I had one experience working in Argentina, with Racing Club, which was not good and I wanted to put the record straight. I could have worked for a number of English clubs as a consultant or sports director but the only thing I wanted at this stage of my career with to be a hands-on coach again. Home is still London but when you have been away in as many places as I have – Japan, Croatia, Saudi Arabia and Israel – it's not easy to fit straight back in.

How was your time in Japan?
I enjoyed it. I was there for seven years as coach of Shimizu S-Pulse, Yokohama Marinos and Tokyo Verdy. It's one of the best places for foreign coaches because they are highly respected. The stadia, the facilities and the infrastructure are all as good as the best you can find in Europe. Also, the football in Japan is improving fast. They play the best club football in Asia, and I was lucky enough to win all the domestic prizes. People wanted me to stay, and there will always be a place for me if I want to go back. Maybe I will one day.

You also worked in a very different environment, at Dinamo Zagreb. How did that compare?
Zagreb is a wonderful city and I had no problems settling there but I had to leave for reasons which were more to do with politics than sport. We were top of the table and unbeaten in the League but the president of the club, who was also the mayor, lost his job and the new regime decided to change everything he had done – which included appointing me! The fact that the team were playing both well and successfully was immaterial.

The only problem I had was with language. I had trouble with the first three translators because none of them spoke much English. Then we got an Argentinian guy who knew all the football terminology, and I thought he was the answer. The next day he sat alongside me on the bench to shout instructions. But the day after that he told me he was resigning because the newspapers all criticised him for not speaking Serbo-Croat well enough!

Was it strange to go on to work in Saudi Arabia?
Not really. Saudi football has a very strong local tradition and the national team now are almost always in the World Cup finals. Their problem is in not fulfilling their potential, because it must be the richest country in the region. I coached one of the four biggest clubs, Al Ittihad, and lived in Jeddah. But I was overtaken by the same fate as in Zagreb. Once more we were top of the table and unbeaten but then a new president took over the club and said: "All the foreigners, out!" I had signed a one-year contract and they sacked me after three months, which was a pity for a lot of reasons – one of them being the very distinct nature of life there.

Such as?
For a football man like me, in particular, never seeing a woman and not drinking alcohol. One evening, when I was driving home, the locals all stopped their cars in the middle of the road because of the call to prayer...and I was just stuck in this traffic jam and had to wait for half an hour until they had finished their devotions. You always had to think ahead to arrange training so that it did not cut across the times for prayers. If you couldn't do that, training had to stop at prayer time. But in other things the players were very lax. They often skipped training or turned up late.

Was Israel a big contrast?
My last job, before I came back to Argentina, was with Beitar Jerusalem and I was there at a time when there was heavy fighting going on in Lebanon. I was told we were in permanent danger of a missile attack. Also, we had a problem when we qualified for the UEFA Cup because we could not play our home matches at home because of the security risks. But I never felt in danger in Jerusalem. On a personal level it is one of the safest cities I have ever lived in.

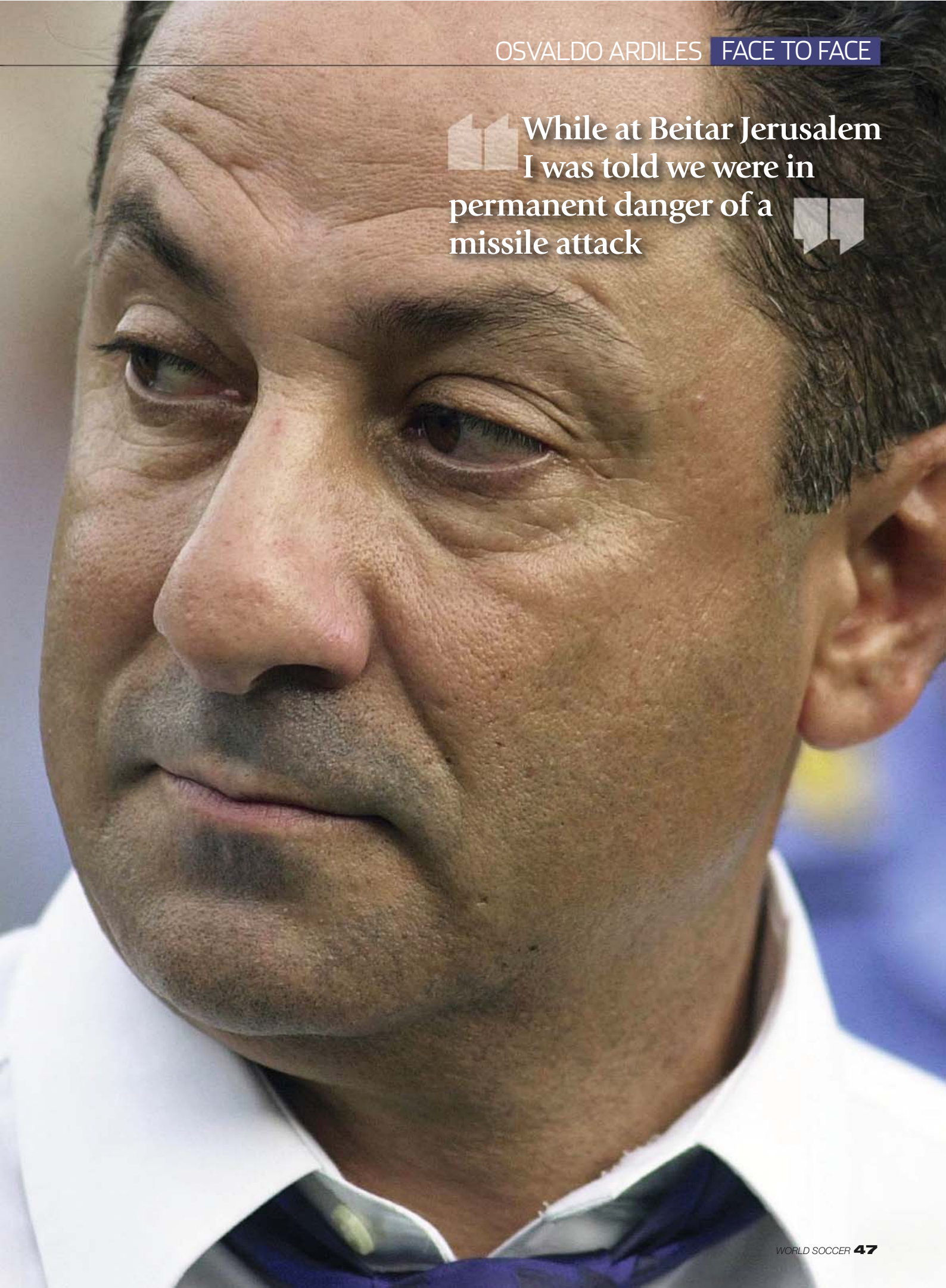
In which league is the best football played?
Spain, England and Italy are the top championships. Follow the money for the best football! That's why the best players go there. Then there are Germany and France, where standards have improved a great deal. Argentina and Brazil are the best in South America.

What is your opinion of the England team?
They have big problems. But what is happening is the same as happened to Argentina. It's hard to imagine an era with better individual players. England has what I would describe as a golden generation. But when it comes to building a team which can win on the big occasions, something is missing.

So what goes wrong?
That's a big subject. You could write a book about it. You have to go right back to how an English player is "created", the sort of football education he receives. That issue has to be approached before anything can change at national team level. It's almost unbelievable that England had to depend on other teams' results to see if they had a chance of qualifying for the Euro finals. That suggests a very poor quality of football, completely at odds with the club game. ●

Interview by Keir Radnedge

More interviews at worldsoccer.com/interviews



> While at Beitar Jerusalem I was told we were in permanent danger of a missile attack

TACTICS The guide to who plays how

No 1: The Bundesliga Sample formations from the German top flight

4-4-2: THE MIDFIELD DIAMOND

Werder Bremen are the best example of this formation. The midfield comprises one holding player, rather narrow right and left-halves and a classic playmaker (Diego), who has total freedom to roam and improvise. Much of the width in this system comes from the attacking full-backs. When the two halves are not in possession they retreat to the same line as the defensive midfielder.

Also used by: Arminia Bielefeld, Bochum, Borussia Dortmund, Hansa Rostock, Wolfsburg.

Freedom to roam...Diego

4-2-2-2: THREE BLOCKS OF TWO

Bayern coach Ottmar Hitzfeld believes the use of a traditional No 10 makes a side slightly predictable. So he prefers a midfield with a pair of creators out wide and two enforcers, though the latter – Mark Van Bommel and Ze Roberto – are technically proficient. This was the formation employed with so much success by Germany at the last World Cup.

Also used by: Eintracht Frankfurt, Energie Cottbus, Hertha Berlin.

Enforcer...Van Bommel

A TACTICAL HISTORY OF... Arsene Wenger How the Frenchman's teams

Visionary... Wenger at Nancy in 1985

1984-85 NANCY 4-4-2

Wenger's first season as head coach. He used a traditional back four, with stopper Albert Cartier and libero Jean-Luc Arribart. In midfield, two workhorses supported two attack-minded players: Ivorian Francois Zahoui, who roamed wide and through the middle, and Uruguay's Ruben Umpierrez, both playmaker and top scorer. Up front, the small, lively Robert Jacques and Fabrice Picot were essentially wingers; the main goalscoring threat came from deep.

1987-88 MONACO 4-3-1-2

Monaco won the French league title in Wenger's first season. Patrick Battiston was sweeper, Remi Vogel the all-powerful centre-half. Wenger used three midfield workhorses to watch the back of No 10 Glenn Hoddle. His English compatriot, Mark Hateley, was the target man, paired with Ivorian speedster Yossouf Fofana out wide. The left flank was very productive, with attacking full-back Manuel Amoros and Fofana combining effectively.

1995 GRAMPUS EIGHT 4-4-2

During Wenger's two years in Japan, Grampus played a conventional system designed to get the best from star forward Dragan Stojkovic. The Yugoslav was already there when Wenger arrived, and the coach brought in three more foreigners: Brazilian Carlos Alexandre Torres and two French midfielders, Franck Durix and Gerald Passi. With only three foreigners allowed at any one time, Passi generally lost out. Wenger later converted Go Oiwa from left-back to centre-back.

4-3-3: TWO WINGERS, ONE STRIKER

Schalke boss Mirko Slomka likes to take a risk or two offensively and argues that two wingers (Gerald Asamoah and Peter Lovenkrands) are the best way to service the aerial power of striker Kevin Kuranyi. In the middle of the park there are two options: a pair of workhorses and a playmaker or just one enforcer and two No 8s. In terms of balance, the former usually works best. The two full-backs are extremely adventurous.

Also used by: Duisburg.

Wide man...Asamoah

4-2-3-1: READY FOR THE COUNTER

An increasingly popular formation in the Bundesliga: champions Stuttgart recently switched to it from 4-4-2 and the season's surprise package, promoted Karlsruhe, also use it. The formation is excellent for counter-attacking, featuring a solid six-man defensive base and an attacking midfield trident of invention and thrust. But it requires a good deal of tactical discipline and pace in forward areas.

Also used by: Bayer Leverkusen, Hannover, Karlsruhe, Nurnberg, Stuttgart.

Lone striker...Olic

have changed through the years

1997-98 ARSENAL 4-4-1-1

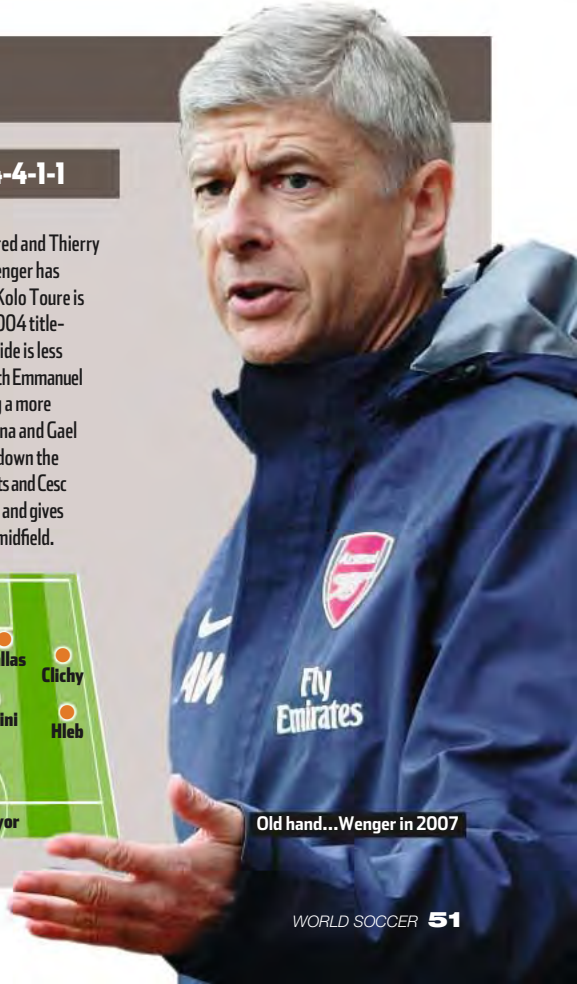
Arsenal won the league and cup Double in Wenger's first full season in charge. The Frenchman opted not to ditch the ageing back four, and his arrival gave them a new lease of life. The central midfield partnership of Emmanuel Petit, a former centre-back under Wenger at Monaco, and young Patrick Vieira gave the team a dynamism that allowed Marc Overmars to attack down the flanks, combining with the mercurial Dennis Bergkamp and the enigmatic Nicolas Anelka.

2003-04 ARSENAL 4-4-1-1

Dubbed The Invincibles after going unbeaten through the entire Premier League season. Arsenal played the best football of Wenger's career, typified by the pace and fluency of Thierry Henry and the intelligence of Dennis Bergkamp. With the Dutchman dropping deep and the Frenchman drifting wide on the left, Arsenal were criticised for lacking a focal point for their attacks, and for attempting to score the perfect goal. But they still produced some magical football.

2007 ARSENAL 4-4-1-1

With Dennis Bergkamp retired and Thierry Henry sold to Barcelona, Wenger has completely rebuilt Arsenal; Kolo Toure is the only survivor from the 2004 title-winning team. The current side is less dependent on one forward, with Emmanuel Adebayor's height providing a more direct approach. Bakary Sagna and Gael Clichy embark on pacy raids down the flanks, while Alex Hleb prompts and Cesc Fabregas exerts his influence and gives extra firepower from central midfield.


Old hand...Wenger in 2007

GERMANY

EURO SQUADS 2007-08

ARMINIA BIELEFELD

GOALKEEPERS		
23	Rowen FERNANDEZ (SAf)	28.02.78
1	Mathias HAIN	31.12.72
28	Daniel RIEMER	17.02.87
DEFENDERS		
6	Markus BOLLMANN	06.01.81
4	Petr GABRIEL (Cze)	17.05.73
13	Oliver KIRCH	21.08.82
19	Bernd KORZYNIETZ	08.09.79
31	Radim KUCERA (Cze)	01.03.74
21	Matthias LANGKAMP	24.02.84
16	Andre MIJATOVIC (Cro)	03.12.79
8	Tobias RAU	31.12.81
34	Maik RODENBERG	29.01.89
35	Nils-Christian SCHMIDT	01.05.84
2	Markus SCHULER	01.08.77
MIDFIELDERS		
20	Jorg BOHME	22.01.74
30	Nils FISCHER	14.02.87
14	Jonas KAMPER	03.05.83
5	Rudiger KAUF	01.03.75
11	David KOBYLIK (Cze)	27.06.81
7	Thorben MARX	01.06.81
10	Ioannis MASMANIDIS	09.03.83
25	Siyabonga NKOSI (SAf)	22.08.81
32	Robert TESCHE	27.05.87
17	UMUT Kocin (Tur)	02.06.88
FORWARDS		
15	Abdelaziz AHANFOUF	14.01.78
9	Christian EIGLER	01.01.84
24	Daniel HALFAR	07.01.88
27	Leonidas KAMPANTAIS (Gre)	08.03.82
18	Artur WICHIAREK (Pol)	28.02.77
22	Sibusiso ZUMA (SAf)	23.06.75
COACH		
Ernst MIDDENDORP		20.10.58

BAYER LEVERKUSEN

GOALKEEPERS		
1	Jorg BUTT	28.05.74
34	Erik DOMASCHKE	11.11.85
22	Benedikt FERNANDEZ	08.01.85
DEFENDERS		
29	Jan-Ingwer CALLSEN-BRACKER	23.09.84
27	Gonzalo CASTRO	11.06.87
5	Manuel FRIEDRICH	13.09.79
17	Vratislav GRESKO (Slk)	24.07.77
2	Karim HAGUI (Tun)	20.01.84
20	Lukas SINKIEWICZ	09.10.85
MIDFIELDERS		
7	Tranquillo BARNETTA (Swi)	22.05.85
14	Sascha DUM	03.07.86
4	Ricardo FATY (Fra)	04.08.86
8	Paul FREIER	26.07.79
28	Carsten RAMELOW	20.03.74
6	Simon ROLFES	21.01.82
15	Hans SARPEI (Gha)	28.06.76
25	Bernd SCHNEIDER	17.11.73
16	Pirmin SCHWEGLER (Swi)	09.03.87
FORWARDS		
36	Sergej BARBAREZ (Bos)	17.09.71
13	Dmitriy BULYKIN (Rus)	20.11.79
10	Theofanis GEKAS (Gre)	23.05.80
11	Stefan KIESSLING	25.01.84
26	Michal PAPADOPOULOS (Cze)	14.04.85
COACH		
Michael SKIBBE		04.08.65

BAYERN MUNICH

GOALKEEPERS		
29	Bernd DREHER	02.11.66
1	Oliver KAHN	15.06.69
22	Michael RENSING	14.05.84
DEFENDERS		
6	Martin DEMICHELIS (Arg)	20.12.80
32	Mats HUMMELS	16.12.88
25	Valerien ISMAEL (Fra)	28.09.75
23	Marcell JANSEN	04.11.85
21	Philipp LAHM	11.11.83
30	Christian LELL	29.08.84
3	LUCIO (Bra)	08.05.78
2	Willy SAGNOL (Fra)	18.03.77
5	Daniel VAN BUYTEN (Blg)	07.02.78
MIDFIELDERS		
8	Hamit ALTINTOP (Tur)	08.12.82
36	Stephan FURSTNER	11.09.87
39	Toni KROOS	04.01.90
16	Andreas OTTL	01.03.85
7	Franck RIBERY (Fra)	01.04.83
31	Bastian SCHWEINSTEIGER	01.08.84
20	Jose Ernesto SOSA (Arg)	19.06.85
17	Mark VAN BOMMEL (Hol)	22.04.77
15	ZE ROBERTO (Bra)	06.07.74
FORWARDS		
18	Miroslav KLOSE	09.06.78
11	Lukas PODOLSKI	04.06.85
19	Jan SCHLAUDRAFF	18.07.83
9	Luca TONI (Ita)	26.05.77
34	Sandro WAGNER	29.11.87
COACH		
Ottmar HITZFELD		12.01.49

BOCHUM

GOALKEEPERS		
1	Philipp HEERWAGEN	13.04.83
27	Jan LASTUVKA (Cze)	07.07.82
31	Rene RENNO	19.02.79
DEFENDERS		
24	Philipp BONIG	20.03.80
2	Matias CONCHA (Swe)	31.03.80
6	Pavel DRSEK (Cze)	22.09.76
30	Patrick FABIAN	11.10.87
4	Marcel MALTRITZ	02.10.78
20	Mergim MAVRAJ	09.06.86
3	Martin MEICHELBECK	21.11.76
18	Oliver SCHRODER	11.06.80
25	Anthar YAHIA (Alg)	21.03.82
MIDFIELDERS		
5	Christoph DABROWSKI	01.07.78
13	Danny FUCHS	25.02.76
17	Ivo ILICEVIC (Cro)	14.11.86
15	Daniel IMHOF (Can)	22.11.77
21	Marc PFERTZEL (Fra)	21.05.81
26	Heinrich SCHMIDTGAL	20.11.85
28	David ZAJAS	01.05.83
8	Tomasz ZDEBEL (Pol)	25.05.73
FORWARDS		
14	Benjamin AUER	11.01.81
7	Tommy BECHMANN (Den)	22.12.81
10	Joel EPALLE (Cam)	20.02.78
19	Dennis GROTE	09.08.86
11	Marcin MIECIEL (Pol)	22.12.75
16	Marc SAND (Aut)	23.01.88
9	Stanislav SESTAK (Slk)	16.12.82
COACH		
Marcel KOLLER (Swi)		11.11.60

BORUSSIA DORTMUND

GOALKEEPERS		
1	Roman WEIDENFELLER	06.08.80
20	Marc ZIEGLER	13.06.76
DEFENDERS		
2	Martin AMEDICK	06.09.82
3	Markus BRZENSKA	25.05.84
17	DEDE (Bra)	18.04.78
23	Philipp DEGEN (Swi)	15.02.83
21	Robert KOVAC (Cro)	06.04.74
33	David VRZOGIC	10.08.89
4	Christian WORNS	10.05.72
MIDFIELDERS		
16	Jakub BLASZCZYKOWSKI (Pol)	14.12.85
8	Giovanni FEDERICO (Ita)	04.10.80
24	Daniel GORDON	16.01.85
5	Sebastian KEHL	13.02.80
6	Florian KRINGE	18.08.82
22	Marc-Andre KRUSKA	29.06.87
10	Mladen PETRIC (Cro)	01.01.81
18	Lars RICKEN	10.07.76
7	TINGA (Bra)	13.01.78
28	Sebastian TYRALA	22.02.88
FORWARDS		
26	Delron BUCKLEY (SAf)	07.12.77
13	Alexander FREI (Swi)	15.07.79
9	Nelson HAEDO VALDEZ (Par)	28.11.83
19	Diego KLIMOWICZ (Arg)	06.07.74
COACH		
Thomas DOLL		09.04.66

DUISBURG

GOALKEEPERS		
1	Sven BEUCKERT	12.12.73
26	Marcel HERZOG (Swi)	28.06.80
27	Tom STARKE	18.03.81
DEFENDERS		
28	Necat AYGUN	26.02.80
33	Stefan BLANK	10.03.77
13	Adam BODZEK	07.09.85
22	Pablo CACERES (Uru)	22.04.85
6	FERNANDO (Bra)	25.02.80
3	Iulian FILIPESCU (Rom)	29.03.74
15	Michael LAMEY (Hol)	29.11.79
5	Alexander MEYER	19.10.83
4	Bjorn SCHLICKE	23.06.81
2	Christian WEBER	15.09.83
MIDFIELDERS		
31	Nils-Ole BOOK	17.02.86
7	Blagoy GEORGIEV (Bul)	21.12.81
20	Ivica GRLIC (Bos)	06.08.75
30	MAICON (Bra)	14.09.85
16	Youssef MOKHTARI (Mor)	05.03.79
21	Markus NEUMAYR	26.03.86
8	Mihai TARARACHE (Rom)	25.10.77
11	Christian TIFFERT	18.02.82
14	Andreas VOSS	27.02.79
29	Tobias WILLI	14.12.79
FORWARDS		
34	AILTON (Bra)	19.07.73
17	Markus DAUN	10.09.80
10	Mohamadou IDRISSOU (Cam)	08.03.80
19	Manasseh ISHIAKU (Nig)	09.01.83
9	Klemen LAVRIC (Sln)	12.06.81
25	Sascha MOLDERS	20.03.85
23	Simon TERODDE	02.03.88
COACH		
Rudolf BOMME		19.08.57

EINTRACHT FRANKFURT

GOALKEEPERS		
1	Oka NIKOLOV (Mac)	25.05.74
21	Markus PROLL	28.08.79
28	Jan ZIMMERMANN	19.04.85
DEFENDERS		
31	Mounir CHAFTAR	29.01.86
29	CHRIS (Bra)	25.08.78
3	Aaron GALINDO (Mex)	08.05.82
27	Sotirios KYRGIAKOS (Gre)	23.07.79
2	Patrick OCHS	14.05.84
23	Marco RUSS	04.08.85
16	Christoph SPYCHER (Swi)	30.03.78
5	Aleksandar VASOSKI (Mac)	21.11.79
MIDFIELDERS		
6	Michael FINK	01.02.82
20	Junichi INAMOTO (Jap)	18.09.79
22	Kreso LJUBICIC (Cro)	26.09.88
15	Mehdi MAHDAVIKIA (Irn)	24.07.77
14	Alexander MEIER	17.01.83
4	Christoph PREUSS	04.07.81
8	Albert STREIT	28.03.80
32	Faton TOSKI	17.02.87
10	Markus WEISSENBERGER (Aut)	08.03.75
FORWARDS		
18	Ioannis AMANATIDIS (Gre)	03.12.81
9	Marcel HELLER	12.02.86
7	Benjamin KOHLER	04.08.80
19	Naohiro TAKAHARA (Jap)	04.06.79
11	Michael THURK	28.05.76
COACH		
Friedhelm FUNKEL		10.12.53

ENERGIE COTTBUS

GOALKEEPERS		
12	Martin MANNEL	16.03.88
23	Tomislav PIPLICA (Bos)	05.04.69
1	Gerhard TREMMEL	16.11.78
DEFENDERS		
4	Stanislav ANGELOV (Bul)	12.04.78
27	Ovidiu BURCA (Rom)	16.03.80
33	Mario CVITANOVIC (Cro)	06.05.75
6	Vragel DA SILVA (Bra)	29.03.74
22	Arne FEICK	01.04.88
25	Kristian IPSA (Cro)	04.04.86
18	Lukasz KANIK (Pol)	26.02.88
24	Igor MITRESKI (Mac)	19.02.79
15	Toni WACHSMUTH	15.11.86
17	Daniel ZIEBIG	21.01.83
MIDFIELDERS		
26	Efstathios ALONEFTIS (Cyp)	29.03.83
21	Tomasz BANDROWSKI (Pol)	18.09.84
3	Christian BASSILA (Fra)	05.10.77
5	Mariusz KUKIELKA (Pol)	07.11.76
30	Marco KUNTZEL	22.01.76
16	Michael LERCHL	09.08.86
7	Timo ROST	29.08.78
13	Sebastian SCHUPPAN	18.07.86
20	SHAO Jiayi (Chn)	10.04.80
11	Ervin SKELA (Alb)	17.11.76
FORWARDS		
2	Steffen BAUMGART	05.01.72
9	Francis KIOYO (Cam)	18.09.79
8	Dimitar RANGELOV (Bul)	09.02.83
10	Stiven RIVIC (Cro)	09.08.85
29	Dennis SORENSEN (Den)	24.05.81
19	Przemyslaw TRYTKO (Pol)	26.08.87
COACH		
Bojan PRASNIKAR (Sln)		03.02.53

HAMBURG

GOALKEEPERS		
12	Wolfgang HESL	13.01.86
1	Frank ROST	30.06.73
DEFENDERS		
3	Thimothee ATOUBA (Cam)	17.02.82
30	Collin BENJAMIN (Nam)	03.08.78
19	Jerome BOATENG	03.09.88
10	Vincent KOMPANY (Blg)	10.04.86
21	Sebastian LANGKAMP	15.01.88
5	Joris MATHIJSEN (Hol)	05.04.80
4	Bastian REINHARDT	19.11.75
MIDFIELDERS		
28	Otto ADDO (Gha)	09.06.75
32	Anis BEN-HATIRA	18.07.88
24	Miso BRECKO (Sln)	01.05.84
8	Nigel DE JONG (Hol)	30.11.84
20	Guy DEMEL (IvC)	13.06.81
13	Mario FILLINGER	10.10.84
14	David JAROLIM (Cze)	17.05.79
25	Kosi SAKA (Con)	04.02.86
2	Juan Pablo SORIN (Arg)	05.05.76
15	Piotr TROCHOWSKI	22.03.84
23	Rafael VAN DER VAART (Hol)	11.02.83
FORWARDS		
18	Romeo CASTELEN (Hol)	03.05.83
22	Eric Maxim CHOUPO-MOTING	23.03.89
9	Jose Paolo GUERRERO (Per)	01.01.84
11	Ivica OLIC (Cro)	14.09.79
34	Sidney SAM	31.01.88
7	Mohamed ZIDAN (Egy)	11.12.81
COACH		
Huub STEVENS (Hol)		29.11.53

HANNOVER

GOALKEEPERS		
1	Robert ENKE	24.08.77
20	Richard GOLZ	05.06.68
30	Morten JENSEN	20.09.87
25	Frank JURIC (Aus)	28.10.73
DEFENDERS		
6	Steven CHERUNDOLO (USA)	19.02.79
22	Frank FAHRENHORST	24.09.77
5	Thomas KLEINE	28.12.77
32	Moritz MARHEINEKE	20.02.85
19	Christian SCHULZ	01.04.83
18	Michael TARNAT	27.10.69
2	VINICIUS (Bra)	31.07.80
3	Dariusz ZURAW (Pol)	14.11.72
MIDFIELDERS		
14	Hanno BALITSCH	02.01.81
10	Arnold BRUGGINK (Hol)	24.07.77
11	Szabolcs HUSZTI (Hun)	18.04.83
17	Gaetan KREBS (Fra)	18.11.85
8	Altin LALA (Alb)	18.11.75
7	Sergio PINTO (Por)	16.10.80
26	Jan ROSENTHAL	07.04.86
27	Silvio SCHROTER	29.06.79
23	Chavdar YANKOV (Bul)	29.03.84
15	Salvatore ZIZZO (USA)	03.04.87
FORWARDS		
13	Thomas BRDARIC	23.01.75
28	Hendrik HAHNE	15.04.86
9	Mike HANKE	05.11.83
16	Vahid HASHEMIAN (Irn)	21.07.76
21	Benjamin LAUTH	04.08.81
31	Fabian MONTABELL	13.02.85
24	Jiri STAJNER (Cze)	27.05.76
COACH		
Dieter HECKING		12.09.64

EURO SQUADS 2007-08

HANSA ROSTOCK

GOALKEEPERS		
21	Jorg HAHNEL	11.01.82
29	Patric KLANDT	29.09.83
1	Stefan WACHTER	20.04.78
DEFENDERS		
23	DIEGO MORAIS (Bra)	11.02.83
2	Dexter LANGEN	16.12.80
5	Benjamin LENSE	30.11.78
4	ORESTES (Bra)	24.03.81
3	Heath PEARCE (USA)	13.08.84
13	Tim SEBASTIAN	17.01.84
12	Marc STEIN	07.07.85
MIDFIELDERS		
27	Fin BARTELS	07.02.87
22	Stefan BEINLICH	13.01.72
31	Kai BULOW	31.05.86
8	Djordjije CETKOVIC (Mne)	03.01.83
14	Ryan GYAKI (Can)	06.12.85
15	Christian RAHN	15.06.79
17	Tobias RATHGEB	03.05.82
7	Rene RYDLEWICZ	18.07.73
25	Simon TUTING	07.09.86
10	Zafer YELEN (Tur)	30.08.86
FORWARDS		
28	Victor AGALI (Nig)	29.12.78
20	Regis DORN (Fra)	22.12.79
11	Sebastian HAHNGE	11.03.78
9	Enrico KERN	12.03.79
26	Addy-Waku MENGA (DRC)	28.09.83
24	Marcel SCHIED	28.07.83
18	Amir SHAPOURZADEH	19.09.82
COACH		
Frank PAGELSDORF		05.02.58

HERTHA BERLIN

GOALKEEPERS		
1	Jaroslav DROBNY (Cze)	18.10.79
12	Christian FIEDLER	27.03.75
30	Christopher GANG	10.05.88
DEFENDERS		
36	Pascal BIELER	26.02.86
29	Malik FATHI	29.10.83
3	Arne FRIEDRICH	29.05.79
14	Josip SIMUNIC (Cro)	18.02.78
4	Steve VON BERGEN (Swi)	10.06.83
27	Amadeus WALLSCHLAGER	01.09.85
MIDFIELDERS		
5	Sofian CHAHED	18.04.83
24	Bilal CUBUKCU (Tur)	16.05.87
8	Pal DARDAI (Hun)	16.03.76
20	Patrick EBERT	17.03.87
6	GILBERTO (Bra)	25.04.76
22	Tobias GRAHN (Swe)	05.03.80
16	LUCIO (Bra)	20.06.79
28	Fabian LUSTENBERGER (Swi)	02.05.88
7	MINEIRO (Bra)	02.08.75
37	Christian MULLER	28.02.84
19	Andreas SCHMIDT	14.09.73
38	Ibrahima TRAORE (Fra)	21.04.88
FORWARDS		
33	ANDRE LIMA (Bra)	03.05.85
39	Chinedu EDE	05.02.87
21	Solomon OKORONKWO (Nig)	02.03.87
9	Marko PANTELIC (Ser)	15.09.78
26	Lukasz PISZCZEK (Pol)	03.06.85
COACH		
Lucien FAVRE (Swi)		02.11.57

KARLSRUHE

GOALKEEPERS		
14	Jean-Francois KORNETZKY (Fra)	28.07.82
1	Markus MILLER	08.04.82
DEFENDERS		
19	Stefan BUCK	03.09.80
23	Florian DICK	09.11.84
5	Mario EGGIMANN (Swi)	24.01.81
21	Christian EICHNER	24.11.82
3	Maik FRANZ	05.08.81
77	Andreas GORLITZ	31.01.82
2	Christopher REINHARD	19.05.85
16	Martin STOLL	09.02.83
MIDFIELDERS		
4	Godfried ADUOBE (Gha)	29.10.75
6	Bradley CARNELL (SAf)	21.01.77
30	Tamas HAJNAL (Hun)	15.03.81
13	Michael MUTZEL	27.09.79
10	Massimilian PORCELLO	23.06.80
8	Timo STAFFELDT	09.02.84
FORWARDS		
18	Sebastian FREIS	23.04.85
20	Alexander IASHVILI (Geo)	23.10.77
9	Edmond KAPLLANI (Alb)	31.07.82
11	Sanibal ORAHOVAC (Mne)	12.12.78
7	Christian TIMM	27.02.79
COACH		
Edmund BECKER		18.07.56

NURNBERG

GOALKEEPERS		
29	Jaromir BLAZEK (Cze)	29.12.72
18	Daniel KLEWER	04.03.77
1	Alexander STEPHAN	15.09.86
DEFENDERS		
3	Michael BEAUCHAMP (Aus)	08.03.81
4	GLAUBER (Bra)	05.08.83
2	Lars JACOBSEN (Den)	20.09.79
30	Michael KAMMERMEYER	14.01.86
25	Horacio Javier PINOLA (Arg)	24.02.82
28	Dominik REINHARDT	19.12.84
16	Ralf SCHMIDT	09.10.85
23	Matthew SPIRANOVIC (Aus)	27.06.88
5	Andreas WOLF	12.06.82
MIDFIELDERS		
22	Marco ENGELHARDT	02.12.80
6	Tomas GALASEK (Cze)	15.01.73
34	Lukas KLING	13.11.89
24	Peer KLUGE	22.11.80
15	Jan KRISTIANSEN (Den)	04.08.81
11	Marek MINTAL (Slk)	02.09.77
10	Zvjezdan MISIMOVIC (Bos)	05.06.82
36	Jawhar MNARI (Tun)	08.11.76
37	Sebastian SZIKAL	17.11.86
21	Dario VIDOSIC (Aus)	08.04.87
FORWARDS		
17	Nicky ADLER	23.05.85
32	Leon BENKO (Cro)	11.11.83
9	Angelos HARISTEAS (Gre)	09.02.80
20	Joshua KENNEDY (Aus)	20.08.82
35	Chhunly PAGENBURG	10.11.86
13	Ivan SAENKO (Rus)	17.10.83
33	Robert VITTEK (Slk)	01.04.82
26	Christoph WEBER	26.08.86
COACH		
Hans MEYER		03.11.42

SCHALKE

GOALKEEPERS		
32	Ralf FAHRMANN	27.09.88
1	Manuel NEUER	27.03.86
33	Mathias SCHOBER	08.04.76
34	Toni TAPALOVIC	10.10.80
DEFENDERS		
4	Mathias ABEL	22.06.81
5	Marcelo Jose BORDON (Bra)	07.01.76
23	Benedikt HOWEDES	29.02.88
20	Mladen KRSTAJIC (Ser)	04.03.74
24	Christian PANDER	28.08.83
18	RAFINHA (Bra)	07.09.85
16	Dario RODRIGUEZ (Uru)	17.09.74
2	Heiko WESTERMANN	14.08.83
MIDFIELDERS		
26	Mimoun AZAOUAGH	17.11.82
25	Zlatan BAJRAMOVIC (Bos)	12.08.79
8	Fabian ERNST	30.05.79
21	Carlos Javier GROSSMULLER (Uru)	04.05.83
28	Markus HEPPKE	11.04.86
13	Jermaine JONES	03.11.81
3	Levan KOBIASHVILI (Geo)	10.07.77
17	Mesut OZIL	15.10.88
10	Ivan RAKITIC (Cro)	10.03.88
7	Gustavo VARELA (Uru)	14.05.78
FORWARDS		
19	Halil ALTINTOP (Tur)	08.12.82
14	Gerald ASAMOAH	03.10.78
22	Kevin KURANYI	02.03.82
9	Soren LARSEN (Den)	06.09.81
11	Peter LOVENKRANDS (Den)	29.01.80
COACH		
Mirko SLOMKA		12.09.67

STUTTGART

GOALKEEPERS		
12	Michael LANGER (Aut)	06.01.85
1	Raphael SCHAFER	30.01.79
31	Alexander STOLZ	13.10.83
DEFENDERS		
2	Andreas BECK	13.03.87
15	Arthur BOKA (IvC)	02.04.83
17	Matthieu DELPIERRE (Fra)	26.04.81
6	FERNANDO MEIRA (Por)	05.06.78
4	GLEDSON (Bra)	04.09.79
21	Ludovic MAGNIN (Swi)	20.04.79
3	Ricardo OSORIO (Mex)	30.03.80
42	Marco PISCHORN	01.01.86
5	Serdar TASCI	24.04.87
MIDFIELDERS		
25	ANTONIO da Silva (Bra)	13.06.78
10	Yildiray BASTURK (Tur)	24.12.78
8	Alexander FARNERUD (Swe)	10.05.84
19	Roberto HILBERT	16.10.84
11	Thomas HITZLSPERGER	05.04.82
28	Sami KHEDIRA	04.04.87
29	Georges MANDJECK (Cam)	09.12.88
7	Silvio MEISSNER	19.01.73
13	Pavel PARDO (Mex)	26.07.76
36	Peter PERCHTOLD	02.09.84
FORWARDS		
18	CACAU (Bra)	27.03.81
9	EWERTHON (Bra)	10.06.81
23	Manuel FISCHER	19.09.89
33	Mario GOMEZ	10.07.85
20	Ciprian MARICA (Rom)	02.10.85
COACH		
Armin VEH		01.02.61

WERDER BREMEN

GOALKEEPERS		
40	Nico PELLATZ	08.07.86
33	Christian VANDER	24.10.80
1	Tim WIESE	17.12.81
DEFENDERS		
2	Sebastian BOENISCH	01.02.87
8	Clemens FRITZ	07.12.80
29	Per MERTESACKER	29.09.84
4	NALDO (Bra)	10.09.82
15	Patrick OWOMOYELA	05.11.79
3	Petri PASANEN (Fin)	24.09.80
13	Dusko TOSIC (Ser)	19.01.85
5	Pierre WOME (Cam)	26.03.79
MIDFIELDERS		
16	Leon ANDREASEN (Den)	23.04.83
31	Kevin ARTMANN	21.04.86
6	Frank BAUMANN	29.10.75
38	Amaury BISCHOFF	31.03.87
24	Tim BOROWSKI	02.05.80
19	CARLOS ALBERTO (Bra)	11.12.84
10	DIEGO (Bra)	28.02.85
22	Torsten FRINGS	22.11.76
20	Daniel JENSEN (Den)	25.06.79
25	Peter NIEMEYER	22.11.83
7	Jurica VRANJES (Cro)	31.01.80
FORWARDS		
34	Martin HARNIK (Aut)	10.06.87
23	HUGO ALMEIDA (Por)	23.05.84
14	Aaron HUNT	04.09.86
17	Ivan KLASNIC (Cro)	29.01.80
9	Markus ROSENBERG (Swe)	27.09.82
18	Boubacar SANOGO (IvC)	17.12.82
28	Kevin SCHINDLER	21.05.88
COACH		
Thomas SCHAAF		30.04.61

WOLFSBURG

GOALKEEPERS		
1	Simon JENTZSCH	04.05.76
12	Andre LENZ	19.11.73
21	Patrick PLATINS	19.04.83
DEFENDERS		
22	ALEX (Por)	06.09.79
17	Alexander MADLUNG	11.07.82
2	Facundo QUIROGA (Arg)	10.01.78
5	RICARDO COSTA (Por)	16.05.81
4	Marcel SCHAFER	07.06.84
6	Jan SIMUNEK (Cze)	20.02.87
3	Peter VAN DER HEYDEN (Blg)	16.07.76
MIDFIELDERS		
8	Daniel BAIER	18.05.84
24	Ashkan DEJAGAH	05.07.86
25	Christian GENTNER	14.08.85
28	Kamani HILL (USA)	28.12.85
7	JOSUE (Bra)	19.07.79
10	Jacek KRZYNOWEK (Pol)	15.05.76
11	Alexander LAAS	05.05.84
15	Christopher LAMPRECHT	22.04.85
18	Cedrick MAKIADI (DRC)	23.02.84
32	MARCELINHO (Bra)	17.05.75
19	Vlad MUNTEANU (Rom)	16.01.81
20	Sascha RIETHER	23.03.83
14	Jonathan SANTANA (Arg)	19.10.81
27	Pablo THIAM (Gui)	03.01.74
FORWARDS		
13	Isaac BOAKYE (Gha)	26.11.81
9	Edin DZEKO (Bos)	17.03.86
23	GRAFITE (Bra)	02.04.79
36	Mame Cheikh NIANG (Sen)	31.03.84
31	Emre OZTURK	01.04.86
29	Sergiu RADU (Rom)	10.08.77
COACH		
Felix MAGATH		26.07.53

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GREECE

Otto sticks to his guns

The defending champions reached the finals after coach Rehhagel opted to keep faith with the players and the tactics that proved successful in 2004. Nick Bidwell reports

GREECE'S ATTEMPT TO defend the European Championship title will depend to a large extent on the effectiveness of their "German connection".

The team are still led by former Werder Bremen, Bayern Munich and Kaiserslautern coach Otto Rehhagel, the wily architect of their totally unexpected triumph at Euro 2004. And his first-choice line-up has a liberal sprinkling of Bundesliga talent, with Eintracht Frankfurt's Sotirios Kyrgiakos setting a combative example in central defence, and Nurnberg's Angelos Haristeas, Bayer Leverkusen's Theo Gekas and Frankfurt's Ioannis Amanatidis forming the front line.

It was Amanatidis who sealed Greece's place in the Austria-Switzerland finals with the only goal of the game away to Turkey in October. While Greece under Rehhagel have a well-deserved reputation for a minimalist style, keeping it tight at the back and capitalising on opposition mistakes, the victory in Istanbul was no smash-and-grab raid. Greece dominated throughout, albeit against a timorous, imprecise Turkish side, and would have achieved an even larger winning margin if their finishing had been more assured.

It had been a very different picture just seven months earlier when the Turks took advantage of a sloppy Hellenic performance – with keeper Antonis Nikopolidis particularly culpable – to run out comfortable 4-1 winners in Piraeus.

Rehhagel in the dock

Cue a period of pitch-black pessimism for Greek fans and, not for the first time, the placing of Rehhagel in the dock. The German had lost his "miracle worker" tag when failing to steer the team to last year's World Cup, and this latest embarrassing setback against their bitter foes only intensified the feelings of antipathy towards him.

His detractors accused him of showing excessive loyalty to his Euro 2004 side, of stubbornly slapping a preservation order on players whose motivation and form had slumped markedly. The team badly needed fresh leadership, claimed the critics, not a complacent boss stuck in a timewarp.

But Rehhagel, thick-skinned and strong-willed, would never give his detractors the satisfaction of pushing him towards the exit or forcing a substantial change of tack. Yes, he decided at this point to drop Nikopolidis in favour of Konstantinos Chalkias of Aris Salonika and replace left-back Panagiotis Fissas with Olympiakos' Vassilios Torosidis, but anyone hoping for a revolution would have been disappointed. As the coach never tires of insisting, experience trumps youthful promise every time. To him, the old-guard blueprint for success was the only viable option.

Greek earners...Amanatidis is mobbed after scoring the goal against Turkey that sealed his side's qualification

> "As the coach never tires of insisting, experience trumps youthful promise every time"

In terms of Euro 2008 qualification, he was proved right. Instead of folding psychologically in the wake of the Turkey defeat, the Greeks impressively held their nerve, winning four and drawing one of their next five ties to seal their finals place. They might not be blessed with collective or individual brilliance, and are no thrill-a-minute outfit. Yet they do form a thoroughly cohesive unit and know how to get a job done.

Qualification has not stifled dissent completely. Many feel Rehhagel's predilection for 4-3-3 leaves the team undermanned in midfield. Meanwhile, there is still a clamour for squad rejuvenation. Four players from the Under-19 side that were runners-up in this year's European Championship have been touted for inclusion – midfielder Sotiris Ninis, playmaker Eleni Dimoutsos (both of Panathinaikos), left-back Nikos Spyropoulos of Panionios and AEK Athens centre-back Sokratis Papastathopoulos.

One or two may be lucky enough to be on the plane to the finals. But all of them? Never. Rehhagel prefers to leave risk-taking to others.

More Euro 2008 team profiles at worldsoccer.com

Us against the world...Rehhagel is a shrewd motivator

THE COACH

Otto Rehhagel

The German veteran, in charge since August 2001, ensured his place in the international football pantheon when leading the team to their remarkable victory at Euro 2004. The bombastic 69-year-old compares with the best in terms of tactical acumen, defensive organisation and ability to instil an "us against the world" mentality. Made his name during a long spell at Werder Bremen (1981-95), whom he steered to two Bundesliga titles (1988 and 1993) and the 1992 European Cup-winners Cup. Led Kaiserslautern to the German second division and Bundesliga titles in consecutive campaigns (1997 and 1998). The one blot on his career was

Predatory...Gekas

an unhappy eight-month stint at Bayern Munich in 1995-96. His methods irritated the club's superstars, resulting in his dismissal.

KEY PLAYERS

Theofanis Gekas

Natural penalty-area predator, all hustle, bustle and incisiveness. Left Panathinaikos for Bundesliga side Bochum at the start of last season and enjoyed an outstanding campaign, scoring 20 goals to finish as the division's top marksman. Finishes best with his right foot, but is also adept with his left and head. Moved to Bayer Leverkusen in the summer.

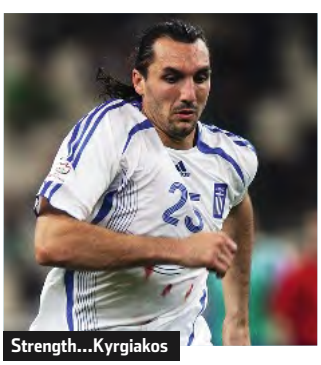
Giorgios Karagounis

Superb midfield all-rounder with drive, industry, deftness of touch and shooting power. Highly influential during Euro 2004, though suspended for the Final. Back at Panathinaikos after spells with Internazionale and Benfica.

Drive...Karagounis

Sotirios Kyrgiakos

Warrior-like centre-back who offers great strength in the air and physicality. A major threat at set-pieces – he scored a brace in the 2-2 Euro 2008 qualifying draw away to Norway in September. The former Panathinaikos and Rangers player has been tipped to leave his current club, Eintracht Frankfurt, for Stuttgart in January.


Strength...Kyrgiakos

SQUAD

	CLUB	DOB	CAPS	GOALS
GOALKEEPERS				
Konstantinos CHALKIAS	Aris Salonika	30.05.74	11	0
Stefanos KOTSOLIS	Larisa	06.05.79	3	0
Antonis NIKOPOLIDIS	Olympiakos	14.01.71	81	0
DEFENDERS				
Paraskevas ANTZAS	Olympiakos	18.08.76	20	0
Traianos DELLAS	AEK Athens	31.01.76	38	1
Panagiotis FISSAS	Panathinaikos	12.06.73	60	4
Ioannis GOUMAS	Panathinaikos	24.05.75	42	0
Michail KAPSIS	APOEL (Cyp)	18.10.73	35	1
Sotirios KYRGIAKOS	Eintracht Frankfurt (Ger)	23.07.79	32	4
Christos PATSATZOGLOU	Olympiakos	19.03.79	23	1
Giorgios SEITARIDIS	Atletico Madrid (Spa)	04.06.81	53	1
Nikos SPYROPOULOS	Panionios	10.10.83	1	0
Efstathios TAVLARIDIS	Saint-Etienne (Fra)	25.01.80	2	0
Vassilios TOROSIDIS	Olympiakos	10.06.85	8	0
Loukas VYNTRA	Panathinaikos	05.02.81	13	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Angelos BASINAS	Mallorca (Spa)	03.01.76	82	5
Stelios GIANNAKOPOULOS	Bolton (Eng)	12.07.74	69	12
Pantelis KAFES	AEK Athens	24.06.78	30	4
Giorgios KARAGOUNIS	Panathinaikos	06.03.77	67	4
Konstantinos KATSOURANIS	Benfica (Por)	21.06.79	42	4
Panagiotis LAGOS	Iraklis	18.07.85	6	0
Sotiris NINIS	Panathinaikos	03.04.90	0	0
Alexandros TZIOLIS	Paniliakos	13.02.85	3	0
FORWARDS				
Ioannis AMANATIDIS	Eintracht Frankfurt (Ger)	03.12.81	20	1
Theofanis GEKAS	Bayer Leverkusen (Ger)	23.05.80	20	3
Angelos HARISTEAS	Nurnberg (Ger)	09.02.80	61	17
Nikolaos LIMBEROPOULOS	AEK Athens	04.08.75	54	12
Dimitrios PAPADOPOULOS	Panathinaikos	20.10.81	20	2
Dimitrios SALPIGIDIS	Panathinaikos	10.08.81	14	0
Giorgios SAMARAS	Manchester City (Eng)	21.02.85	13	3

Caps and goals information as at 18.10.07

Greeks bearing no gifts...the team are still hard to break down

ROMANIA

Dark horses

Victor Piturca's resilient side are capable of causing a few shocks next summer, says Nick Bidwell

ROMANIA WILL BE one of the outsiders to watch at Euro 2008 on the evidence of their performances in the qualifiers, when they secured their finals place with two games to spare in a group also containing Holland and Bulgaria.

The *Tricolorii* have not appeared at a major finals since Euro 2000, when they reached the quarter-finals. But there was no mistake this time around as they took four points from their two ties with the Dutch, the group favourites, and were unbeaten in their first 10 games, during which they scored 20 goals and conceded only five.

The current side do not display the same fluidity and style of the early 1990s version, when Gheorghe Hagi, Florin Raducioiu, Marius Lacatus and Ilie Dumitrescu wove such compelling attacking patterns. But, arguably, today's Romania can count on greater resilience and organisation. Holland did not once pierce their resistance in 180 minutes, and the back four, featuring centre-backs Gabriel Tamas of Auxerre and Dorin Goian of Steaua Bucharest, is rightly considered among the best on the European international scene at the moment.

Chivu the key

The defensive midfielders offer further insurance. The key man here is skipper Cristian Chivu, usually found in central defence for Internazionale, but who has wholly justified the decision of national coach Victor Piturca to play him further forward. Chivu has proved a revelation, with his keen sense of anticipation, steely interventions and good use of the ball.

The screen in front of the back line was crucial in the 1-0 home victory over Holland in October on a sodden night in Constanta. Piturca had opted for three rather than his usual two enforcers, and try as they might, the *Oranje* could not break through the double-layered wall. Goian scored midway through the second half to secure the points.

Apart from Steaua star Nicolae Dica, the midfield is more dynamic than refined. But Piturca, formerly a prolific striker himself, can only be satisfied with the work of his front-runners Adrian Mutu and Ciprian Marica, for whom the goals have flowed regularly during the qualifiers. Mutu, kicked out of Chelsea three years ago for taking cocaine, deserves no little praise for the way he has rebuilt his career. He is once again flourishing for both club (Fiorentina) and country, showing the exquisite mix of subtlety and finishing power that marked him out for greatness as a youth.

Blocked out...Paul Codrea keeps Ruud Van Nistelrooy at bay during the qualifying win over Holland

"Mutu is again showing the mix of subtlety and finishing power that marked him out for greatness"

Other team pluses include their dead-ball expertise (the giant Goian poses a particular threat from corners and free-kicks), the fine overlapping of Shakhtar Donetsk left-back Razvan Rat, and the solidity of Dinamo Bucharest keeper Bogdan Lobont, who seems to have eradicated the lapses of concentration that plagued him when at Ajax.

Piturca, one of football's quiet men, does not go in for self-publicity, and why should he? The fact he has steered the team to Euro 2008 and oversaw a 14-match unbeaten run (ended in September by a 3-1 friendly loss to Germany) speak volumes. The coach has reinstilled belief, discipline and unity in a team who had lost their compass; his meticulous attention to detail has raised standards considerably.

Piturca's ability to steer Romania to success was no real surprise. After all, in his previous stint he qualified them for Euro 2000 without losing a game, only to be deprived of the opportunity to lead the squad at the finals. His crime? To fall out with Hagi and other senior "untouchable" players over bonuses. Player unrest is unlikely to unseat Piturca now, in what are good times for the Romanian team.

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Forward march...Piturca has had success as a player and as a coach

THE COACH

Victor Piturca

The stony-faced, deep-thinking 51-year-old began his second spell in charge of Romania in December 2004. He has also coached the country's Under-21s, Universitatea Craiova and Steaua Bucharest, whom he led to the championship in 2001. Piturca was a prolific striker during his playing days, most of which he spent at Steaua, and really deserved more than 13 caps. He played an instrumental role in Steaua's European Cup triumph in 1986 and collected a runners-up medal in the same competition in 1989.

KEY PLAYERS

Cristian Chivu

The captain first made a name for himself with a string of nerveless performances as a 19-year-old at Euro 2000, since when he has never looked back. Chivu is intelligent, pacy, technically gifted and a free-kick expert,

Role change...Chivu

and has proved himself a top-ranking left-back and central defender. But Piturca prefers him in a midfield holding role. Joined Internazionale in the summer from Roma. Previously with Ajax.

Ciprian Marica

Robust yet speedy young front man, frequently on target in the qualifying campaign. This summer he became the most expensive player in Stuttgart's history, joining the newly-crowned Bundesliga champions from Shakhtar Donetsk for £5.7million. But strangely he has struggled to find his feet in German football up to now.

On target...Marica

Adrian Mutu

Equally formidable as a conventional striker or an attacking midfielder, his class and goalscoring touch have shone like a beacon throughout the qualifiers. He has also matured into a genuine team leader and has certainly responded in the right way since Chelsea fired him in 2004 for drug use. Now clean and firing for Fiorentina in Serie A. ●

Matured...Mutu

SQUAD

	CLUB	DOB	CAPS	GOALS
GOALKEEPERS				
Danut COMAN	Rapid Bucharest	29.03.79	9	0
Bogdan LOBONT	Dinamo Bucharest	18.01.78	59	0
Marius POPA	Poli Timisoara	12.04.78	0	0
DEFENDERS				
Marius CONSTANTIN	Rapid Bucharest	25.10.84	2	0
Cosmin CONTRA	Getafe (Spa)	15.02.75	58	7
Dorin GOIAN	Steaua Bucharest	12.12.80	15	4
Petre MARIN	Steaua Bucharest	08.09.73	10	1
Vasile MATEI	Gloria Bistrita	01.01.81	0	0
George OGARARU	Ajax (Hol)	03.02.80	5	0
Razvan RAT	Shakhtar Donetsk (Ukr)	26.05.81	44	1
Radu STEFAN	Dinamo Bucharest	22.10.86	6	0
Gabriel TAMAS	Auxerre (Fra)	09.11.83	27	1
MIDFIELDERS				
Cristian CHIVU	Internazionale (Ita)	26.10.80	55	3
Razvan COCIS	Lokomotiv Moscow (Rus)	19.02.83	16	1
Paul CODREA	Siena (Ita)	04.04.81	31	1
Adrian CRISTEA	Dinamo Bucharest	30.11.83	4	0
Nicolae DICA	Steaua Bucharest	09.05.80	21	4
Costin LAZAR	Rapid Bucharest	24.04.81	3	0
Andrei MARGARITESCU	Dinamo Bucharest	01.01.80	3	0
Banel NICOLITA	Steaua Bucharest	07.01.85	16	1
Florentin PETRE	CSKA Sofia (Bul)	15.01.76	47	6
Ovidiu PETRE	Steaua Bucharest	22.03.82	18	1
Mirel RADOI	Steaua Bucharest	22.03.81	41	1
Eugen TRICA	CFR Cluj	05.08.76	3	0
Ianis ZICU	Dinamo Bucharest	23.10.83	5	0
FORWARDS				
Florin BRATU	Dinamo Bucharest	01.02.80	11	2
Gheorghe BUCUR	Poli Timisoara	08.04.80	6	2
Ciprian MARICA	Stuttgart (Ger)	02.10.85	19	7
Adrian MUTU	Fiorentina (Ita)	08.01.79	58	27
Daniel NICULAE	Auxerre (Fra)	06.10.82	20	2
Sergiu RADU	Wolfsburg (Ger)	10.08.77	1	0

Caps and goals information as at 18.10.07

New model army...Romania have rediscovered unity and self-belief under Piturca

Local heroes

After years of struggle, the Scottish game is enjoying a dramatic revival at club and international level

SCOTTISH FOOTBALL is currently riding a wave of euphoria. The national team have enjoyed a sensational Euro 2008 qualifying campaign despite having been placed in the "group of death" with 2006 World Cup finalists Italy and France and upwardly-mobile quarter-finalists Ukraine. At press time, Alex McLeish's team stood one result away from the finals.

The game in question happened to be against Italy, the world champions, but that was no longer being viewed as a cause for trepidation. And why should it? Scotland had already beaten France home and away, and made Hampden Park the fortress of old, having won all five Euro 2008 ties played there. They now stand 13th in the FIFA rankings, their highest position, and whatever the outcome against the *Azzurri*, the fact that Scotland are still challenging at the wire is, in itself, a massive boost.

The feelgood factor has been bolstered by strong showings from Scotland's clubs in Europe. In the Champions League, Celtic have beaten holders Milan and Benfica. Rangers have fared even better, overcoming Bundesliga champions Stuttgart, crushing France's top side Lyon 3-0 on their own patch and holding Barcelona at Ibrox. To less acclaim, Aberdeen overcame Dnipro, whose side featured five Ukrainian internationals, to reach the UEFA Cup group stage. Collectively, these results suggest that something fundamentally positive is afoot.

Four years ago, the Scottish game was at one of its lowest ebbs. During a disastrous two-year spell under German Berti Vogts, the national team slipped to 67th in the FIFA rankings, their worst position. Meanwhile, the spectre of financial ruin threatened many clubs after Sky pulled the rug on their lucrative TV deal. Dundee and Livingston went into administration following boom-or-bust profligacy, and even Rangers teetered on the brink after years of living beyond their means.

So what happened to prompt such a dramatic turnaround? "You can identify three main factors," says former Scotland manager Craig Brown. "The quality of the coaching, grassroots development, and the reduction in the number of foreign players."

Prudence is the watchword now in Scotland, and necessarily so. Although Setanta stepped in to take Sky's place, the TV cashpot is now much smaller. Paradoxically, less has proved to be more. Enforced belt-tightening has meant that clubs have had to be more resourceful and place increased reliance on homegrown talent.

"Obviously, having players of the calibre of Brian Laudrup and Henrik Larsson in Scotland was a massive boon," Brown says.

> "Laudrup and Larsson were a boon. But then came dozens of foreigners who added nothing"

"But in their wake came dozens of foreigners, at big fees, who added nothing in terms of quality. The sense that foreign was better is now gone."

Kilmarnock provide a good case in point. In 2002, they were paying French striker Christophe Cocard an annual salary of £350,000. Today, that amount covers the wages of most of the first team combined. Yet they are regular top-six material and have reared talent such as Steven Naismith, now featuring at Rangers.

Scottish Premier League rules obliging clubs to field at least three players of 21 or under in a matchday squad have reinforced the accent on youth development. The benefit for the clubs is that they can now draw on a crop of 20-something players who already have considerable first-team experience. The fruits were visible at last year's Under-19 European Championship, when Scotland were runners-up to Spain.

"Across the board, clubs are now putting much more into youth development," Brown says. "Hibs, Aberdeen, Celtic and Motherwell have been especially strong in this regard."

Coach education programme

While the benefits are only now being seen, Brown traces the roots of this process back as far as the late 1970s, when Andy Roxburgh [now UEFA technical director] set up Scotland's coach education programme. "Scotland was the first in the UK to introduce a professional licence course," Brown says. "Jose Mourinho came here to do his badges, and we've had the likes of Carlos Alberto Parreira, Fabio Capello and Arrigo Sacchi involved in coaching seminars.

"At grassroots level, the SFA, in conjunction with clubs, and sometimes the business community, created 30 community coaching positions around the country. And there has been investment in infrastructure, with many more top-quality indoor facilities established."

Scottish players once dominated the English top flight, but there were virtually none five years ago. There was Darren Fletcher at Manchester United, but he was just a squad player, and when Scotland captain Barry Ferguson failed to make an impact at mid-table Blackburn, it appeared to confirm the quality gap.

By contrast, there were 10 Premier League players in the Scotland squad for the Italy match. Fletcher has grown in stature at United, James McFadden, Scotland's new golden boy, has gained more recognition at

We're having a laugh...Alan Hutton, captain Barry Ferguson and goalscorer Kenny Miller celebrate after Scotland take the lead in the 3-1 Euro 2008 qualifying win over Ukraine

Everton, while Derby boast no fewer than four Scottish internationals.

More predictably, 10 of the squad were from the Old Firm. The difference nowadays is that, with both Rangers and Celtic competing in the group stage of the Champions League, these players are regularly testing themselves against the best clubs from Italy, Spain and France. So when Scotland face the *Azzurri* or *Les Bleus*, it is no longer a culture shock.

The much-vilified Vogts recently sought to claim some credit for Scotland's success. He did, after all, give a first break to many of the players now in the first team, not least Craig Gordon, whose £10million move from Hearts to Sunderland this summer made him Britain's most expensive goalkeeper. But then, probability alone meant that Vogts' scattergun approach would throw up the odd winner – the German gave debuts to no fewer than 39 players.

When Walter Smith replaced him in 2004, the renewed sense of cohesion and purpose was almost immediate. So Smith's controversial decision to step down halfway through the Euro 2008 cycle and return to Rangers, where he had made his name in the 1990s, met with despair and cries of betrayal. But they were short-lived, as McLeish stepped up and has maintained the momentum.

In the SPL, the Old Firm duopoly remains intact, but the chasing pack is closing the gap and the League now looks more competitive than for decades. In 2006, Hearts, spurred by Vladimir Romanov's cash injection, proved the Old Firm can be split, finishing second ahead of Rangers, and, but for internal turbulence, might have overhauled Celtic, too. The signs are they are starting to rediscover their elan, while Edinburgh rivals Hibernian and Dundee United are both looking much more powerful.

"What we are seeing is more than just a blip," Brown says. "Scotland are benefiting from a fine crop of players coming through. That is the product of long-term planning and the right approach. The Scottish development model is gaining admiration throughout Europe, and rightly so."

Discuss this at worldsoccer.com/forums

Aberdeen, Gretna, Motherwell...a guide to the top division teams

1 INVERNESS CALEDONIAN THISTLE
The product of a merger between two Highland League clubs, Caledonian FC and Inverness Thistle, in 1994. Promotion to the top flight followed a decade later. En route, their 2000 Scottish Cup humbling of Celtic was immortalised by the tabloid headline "Super Caley go ballistic, Celtic are atrocious".

2 ABERDEEN
Under Alex Ferguson in the 1980s, the team from the Granite City broke the domestic hegemony of the Old Firm and won the European Cup-winners Cup. With another Glaswegian, Jimmy Calderwood, now in charge, the Dons have been making steady progress, again with a team made up largely of Scottish players.

3 DUNDEE UNITED
The other half of the "New Firm" that disrupted Glasgow domination in the 1980s. The moniker has stuck, the success has not. Owner Eddie Thompson has hired and fired a series of managers in a bid to rekindle old glories. He may finally have found his man in Craig Levein who, as with Hearts several years ago, is creating a team big on desire and discipline.

4 ST MIRREN
One of the 10 founding clubs of the Scottish League and three times Scottish Cup winners, most recently in 1987. The Paisley club returned to the top flight in 2006 after a five-year absence but would be favourites to fill the relegation slot this term were it not for Gretna.

5 CELTIC
One half of Glasgow's Old Firm, and their rivalry with the other, Rangers, traditionally laced with sectarian animosity, remains one of the most intense in world football. Celtic, whose origins lie in the city's Catholic community, had their finest hour in 1967, when the "Lisbon Lions" defeated Internazionale in the Portuguese capital to lift the European Cup. They have recently underlined their commercial potential with accession to the G-14 ranks. Scottish champions for the past two seasons under Gordon Strachan.

6 RANGERS
The other half of the Old Firm, with roots in Glasgow's Protestant community. Rangers lead Celtic in league title wins – 51 to 41 – and like their rivals have had one European triumph, the 1972 Cup-winners Cup. After two years off the pace, the team have reasserted their championship-winning credentials, have made an impressive start in the Champions League group stage and are set to become an associate member of G-14.

7 MOTHERWELL
The Lanarkshire club last tasted success in 1991, when winning the Scottish Cup. They went into administration in the late 1990s after a spending frenzy. Now, back from the brink, the Steelmen have redefined themselves as a hotbed of young talent.

8 FALKIRK
Somewhat against the odds, the Bairns have maintained their place in the top flight following promotion in 2005. The team are orchestrated on the park by Trinidad & Tobago playmaker Russell Latapy, who remains a cut above most of his team-mates despite being 39 and having a 10-a-day smoking habit.

9 HEARTS
The well-supported club from the west side of Edinburgh have endured a rollercoaster ride since Lithuanian businessman Vladimir Romanov took charge. Hearts have the potential to mount the strongest challenge to the Old Firm but they lack cohesion with a Ukrainian-Bulgarian-Scottish managerial triumvirate, who are not quite in charge.

10 HIBERNIAN
The Edinburgh side have a reputation for playing exciting football and the ability to rear players who bring in sizeable sums when sold on – two notable recent examples are Scott Brown, now at Celtic, and Kevin Thomson (Rangers). Former Hibs player John Collins has taken up where managerial predecessor Tony Mowbray left off: Hibs won the League Cup last season and are doing well in the League this term.

11 KILMARNOCK
Scotland's oldest professional club (founded in 1869) had their finest hour in 1965 when winning the League. Under the canny stewardship of Jim Jefferies, the SPL's longest-serving manager, Killie have overachieved in recent seasons, given their shoestring budget.

12 GRETNA
The recent fairytale story of the Scottish game, having been a non-league club just a decade ago. Successive promotions, fuelled by the millions of eccentric philanthropist owner Brooks Mileson, carried Gretna into the top flight last season. But gravity is kicking in. Squatting at Motherwell's Fir Park because their own ground does not meet SPL standards, they are rooted firmly at the foot of the table.

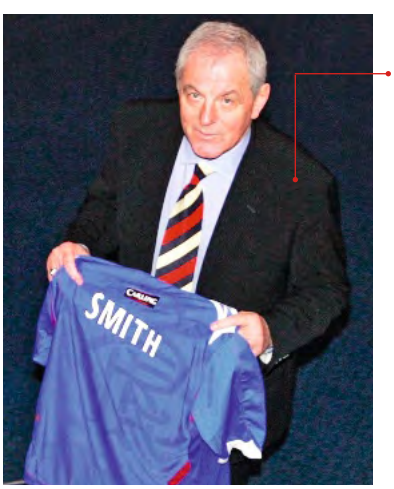
The movers and shakers in Scottish football

SIR DAVID MURRAY
Bought Rangers in 1988 and, as chairman, has presided over sustained periods of domestic success. Murray invested heavily in infrastructure, expanding stadium capacity to 51,000, but his pursuit of European glory prompted wild overspending, plunging the club into dire financial straits in 2001 and a period of purgatory. He is now ready to sell up after switching his attention to rugby.

GORDON SMITH
Former player, agent and media pundit who was surprisingly appointed FA chairman in June 2007 after David Taylor left to join UEFA. He has pledged to be a modernising force, but has refused to endorse a GB football team for the 2012 Olympics. Caused controversy before landing the job by claiming there was an anti-Rangers agenda in the Scottish game.

GORDON STRACHAN
Had the unenviable task of succeeding Martin O'Neill as manager of Celtic. And despite serving up two league titles and taking the side into the knockout stages of the Champions League for the first time last season, there remains a sense that, with no Celtic past to call on, he has yet to fully charm the natives.

BARRY FERGUSON
The Scotland and Rangers captain is a revitalised figure since his return to Ibrox after a brief and unsuccessful dalliance with Blackburn. The midfield general's influence extended to curtailing Rangers' brave experiment with French manager Paul Le Guen.



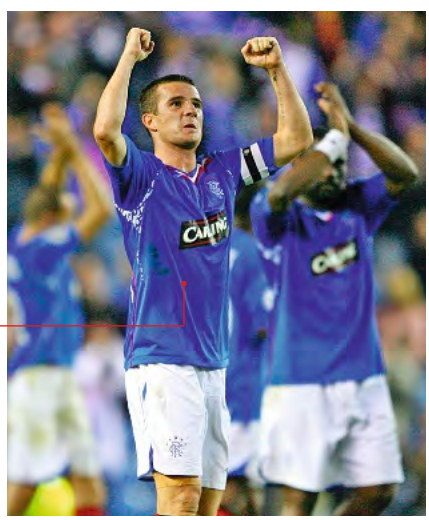
WALTER SMITH
Hugely respected and experienced Rangers manager who led the club to nine successive league titles in the 1990s during his previous spell in charge. Poached from the national team in 2006 to steady the ship after the Paul Le Guen debacle and has swiftly transformed them into title contenders.

JIM TRAYNOR
The *eminence grise* of popular football journalism. Executive sports editor of the *Daily Record*, and his influence as an opinion-shaper is bolstered by his BBC Radio Scotland show, *Your Call*.

VLADIMIR ROMANOV
Controversial Lithuanian businessman who bought Hearts in 2005 to add to his football interests in eastern Europe. Talk of Champions League glory within five years was clearly fanciful, while his succession of rants have made him unpopular with the media and the FA. His ambitious plans include a stadium revamp, but the team's progess has been hampered by managerial sackings and squad tinkering.

PETER LAWWELL
Celtic's former financial controller returned as CEO in 2003 after a decade away in big business. Credited with modernising the club's infrastructure – Celtic recently unveiled their new £8million, state-of-the-art training complex at Lennoxtown after years of making do with substandard facilities – and harnessing their potential as a commercial force at home and abroad, culminating in entry into an expanded G-14.

GRAHAM SPIERS
Probably the most respected – and reviled – Scottish broadsheet football journalist, late of *The Herald* and now *The Times*' "voice of Scottish football". Has been one of the boldest voices in taking the Old Firm to task about sectarianism.



SHUNSUKE NAKAMURA
Celtic's Japanese playmaking and free-kick maestro who has illuminated Scottish football since arriving from Reggina in 2005. His performances have underlined what Henrik Larsson showed before him – that it is a myth that top foreign creative talents cannot do well in the SPL.

ALEX McLEISH
National team manager whose achievement of seven trophies in a four-year spell at Rangers is often underplayed. Has built on the work of Walter Smith to continue the national team's renaissance.

LEX GOLD
As head of the Scottish Premier League, Gold brokered the £35million pay-per-view deal with satellite TV company Setanta. He has also spearheaded controversial plans for a second breakaway tier, SPL 2.

HERNANES

BRAZIL

Midfield cornerstone of Sao Paulo's title triumph

SAO PAULO'S STROLL to the Brazilian championship – their second in a row – is just reward for a club who have become a byword in planning and sound organisation. These virtues were evident in the story of Hernanes, one of the pillars of this year's triumph and who has been described as "a fantastic player" by the club's talismanic captain and goalkeeper Rogerio Ceni.

In mid-campaign key midfielder Josue was called up for the Copa America and then signed by German side Wolfsburg. There was no hiccup, however. Sao Paulo's renowned youth structure had in Hernanes a player ready, willing and able to step forward to replace him.

It had been a long apprenticeship. Hernanes, from Recife in north-east Brazil, had been at Sao Paulo since he was 16 but did not make his breakthrough until the comparatively late age of 22. "I took time to mature physically," he says. Mentally, he grew up fast last year during a loan spell with Santo Andre in Brazil's second division, which he describes as "a great experience. I went as a boy and came back a man."

But there was another problem to overcome. What position would he play? He had started as a full-back but was most often used as a striker at Santo Andre, although he also filled defensive and attacking midfield roles.

Enter Sao Paulo coach Muricy Ramalho. "Muricy was important," recalls Hernanes. "He said that it was best to select an area to specialise in, and that I needed to choose a position. In one training session he ordered the centre-backs, central midfielders, attacking midfielders and strikers to divide up and go to a corner of the pitch. I understood the message and ran to join the central midfielders."

But having shown his all-round ability and chosen his specialist position, Hernanes knows there is still room for improvement. "I know my marking could be better, and on the ball I need to be involved in more moves that end up in goals," he says.

Even so, his contribution to Sao Paulo's title win was immense. At the halfway point in the championship, Brazilian magazine *Placar* had no doubt about the club's defensive excellence, but called the attack weak and concluded: "The main challenge for the rest of the competition is to get the offensive sector to function."

The blossoming of Hernanes did exactly that. His classy passing from central midfield made the side much more fluid in possession; his presence turned Sao Paulo from narrow leaders into runaway champions.

Acclaim has come very suddenly to the young midfielder, and since he plays in a position where Brazil are not at their strongest, an international call-up is seen as a certainty.

But Hernanes has quite separate dreams – about becoming a preacher in the Protestant church he attends. He worries that he lacks a sufficiently powerful voice to do this. There are no such problems on the football field, where his all-round midfield attributes do the talking for him.

Tim Vickery

FACT FILE

Club Sao Paulo
Country Brazil
Born May 29, 1985, in Recife
Previous club Santo Andre (loan)
Honours Brazilian championship 2007

SENEGAL

Moustapha Bayal SALL

"Green revelation" of the French season

FRENCH SPORTS paper *L'Equipe* calls Moustapha Bayal Sall the "green revelation of the season", a reference to the colours of his club, Saint-Etienne. And the giant Senegalese has plenty of other admirers, even if he has been playing out of position.

Sall, 21, has modelled his game on Portsmouth and Senegal's Pape Bouba Diop, and prefers his hero's defensive midfield role. But *Les Verts* coach Laurent Roussey employs him as a central defender, and it is easy to see why. At 90kg and 1.93m (14st and 6ft 3in), he is an imposing figure, powerful in the air, and quick, too.

Sall is certainly not complaining about finally getting a regular run in the team. "I appreciate the confidence shown in me and I'll play in whatever position the coach wants," he says.

Sall arrived 16 months ago from US Goree, the latest in a long line of African footballers to migrate to Saint-Etienne. He came with a glowing reputation, having broken into the Senegal squad when it appeared to be the exclusive preserve of Europe-based players. But he made just four first-team appearances in his first season in France, gaining experience instead with the reserves.

This term has been quite different, with Sall quickly becoming a Ligue 1 regular. And, just around the corner, will come his Nations Cup finals debut.

Mark Gleeson

FACT FILE

Club Saint-Etienne (Fra)
Country Senegal
Born November 30, 1985, in Dakar
Previous clubs AS Police, AS Douanes, US Goree
International debut March 2006, v Norway
International caps 7

SCOTLAND

Alan HUTTON

Rangers full-back dubbed The White Cafu

THE "WHITE CAFU" tag applied to Alan Hutton is not a joke. The 22-year-old Rangers and Scotland player has emerged as one of the best attacking right-backs in Europe and fully deserves to be mentioned in the same breath as the great Brazilian.

Hutton, who made his debut for Rangers as far back as December 2002, may not play with Cafu's elegance. But the young Glaswegian is equally dynamic, galloping forward relentlessly, linking well with team-mates in the attacking-third and proving himself a master craftsman when it comes to delivering quality crosses.

Hutton's defensive game has come on in leaps and bounds, too. He was once guilty of dawdling back to his station after his offensive forays but now shows much more urgency, and his positioning is far less approximate than it used to be.

Hutton, a product of the Rangers youth system, is still prone to making rash lunges and certainly does not lack bite in the tackle, showing he has no mental scars from the broken right leg that kept him out for eight months in 2005.

The Rangers tradition for excellent right-backs is safe in his hands. Predecessors of the calibre of Bobby Shearer and Sandy Jardine would be proud of him.

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

Club Rangers
Country Scotland
Born November 30, 1984, in Glasgow
International debut May 2007, v Austria
International caps 5 (0 goals)
Honours Scottish League 2003, 2005; Scottish Cup 2003

BRAZIL 1982

Brilliant but unbalanced

Doctor's remedy...Brazil's fans go wild after Socrates, mobbed by Junior and Falcao, equalises against Italy in Barcelona

Brian Glanville remembers Tele Santana's side, who dazzled yet failed to reach even the semi-finals at the World Cup in Spain

"BRAZILIAN FOOTBALL is a thing played to music." So said the ever-controversial, innovative, explosive and eccentric Joao Saldanha, sceptical of the stewardship of Claudio Coutinho before the 1978 World Cup finals in Argentina. Rightly, as it proved: Coutinho, destined to drown, poor man, was essentially a physical trainer putting emphasis on fitness and hard running. Saldanha himself had been Brazil's team manager until in a mad moment, shortly before the 1970 World Cup finals, he had proposed – sheer blasphemy! – to drop Pele. Mario Zagallo took over the team and won the World Cup in great style.

As it transpired, for all Coutinho's caution and his stand-off with the gifted Zico, Brazil could well have reached the 1978 Final had not the Argentinians blatantly bought their final second group stage game against Peru. Ludicrously, the tie had been scheduled to take place after Brazil had played their last game, meaning the hosts knew what score they needed to achieve, and their 6-0 win against the limp Peruvians took them to the Final, which they won.

The 1982 team had a manager, Tele Santana, far more closely in tune with the ethos of Brazilian football and the desires of its fans – for attacking football, pure and simple, the kind that had so triumphantly brought the World Cup back to Brazil in 1970 after the traumas of 1966.

Santana had been a notable outside-right with Fluminense, a club he later managed until, showing his solidarity with his players, he kicked down a small wall that was supposed to prevent them going through the principal entrance.

Known as a strong personality who would stand up to any officious pressure, Santana promised, and made good his promise, that Brazil would be an attacking team in Spain. The one emerging problem was that he would not have the attackers. Reinaldo, the talented young centre-forward, was injured yet again. Careca was injured and sent home after he got to Spain. The wife of the striker "Bob Dynamite" Roberto drummed away on her voodoo drums, but although Careca had to quit, Roberto was not the answer.

> **"When Serginho plays, the ball is square"**
>
> *Former Brazil coach Joao Saldanha disparages the forward*

For his part, Santana, when first talked of as the new Brazilian manager, was hardly overwhelmed. He had to think about it, he said. He knew that both Zagallo and Coutinho had aged 10 years in the job and wasn't too keen to see the same thing happen to him. He needed a few days to think about it and discuss it with his wife. Then he would give his answer, which, luckily for Brazil, would be "yes".

Santana was something of an idealist, who deplored the notion of violent play, and his misfortune was that his team proved brilliant but unbalanced. There was a plentitude of supreme talent in midfield – Socrates, Zico, Toninho Cerezo, Falcao – but who was to lead the attack? When Zico, before the finals, denounced Argentina as a one-man team, that man, Diego Maradona, replied with some cogency that Brazil had no forwards. So it would prove. Tall striker Serginho had his moments but was never going to be the answer. "When Serginho plays," said the disparaging Saldanha, "the ball is square."

But what midfielders! The 24-year-old Falcao had been left out of Coutinho's squad in 1978. He was un-Brazilian to the extent that he was not a notable ball player, preferring to keep the ball moving with often decisive passes, but he was described as "a leader and a born perfectionist". Emerging with Internacional of Porto Alegre – a big club but unfashionable so far as Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo clubs tended to dominate the national team – he moved successfully to Roma in 1980. Santana gave him his chance on tour before the World Cup because he knew that Cerezo would be suspended for the opening game. Falcao duly seized it; he couldn't be excluded.

The captain, Dr Socrates of Corinthians, lanky, bearded and outspoken political left-winger, was tireless, ubiquitous, loped rather than ran, controlled the ball immaculately, distributed it shrewdly, was no natural athlete, but a

consummate footballer. He was unaffected it seemed by his penchant for beer and cigarettes; but then hadn't Gerson, a 1970 star, smoked 60 a day? With his first club, Botafogo de Riberao, Socrates often played after 24 hours on hospital duty as an orthopaedic specialist.

Zico, that dazzling little attacking midfielder, was described in Brazil as being "constructed in the laboratory". This was because, as a tiny, underweight, fragile boy, plainly possessed of unusual football skills, he owed his career to the doctor of his favourite Rio club, Flamengo, who put him on steroids and a general regime of rehabilitation with spectacular success. Zico's ball skills were exceptional, his shooting, especially from free-kicks, deadly. Now 29, he had put bitter memories of the 1978 tournament behind him.

> **Zico, a tiny, fragile boy, owed his career to the doctor at Flamengo, who put him on steroids and a rehab regime with spectacular success**

Bicycle racer...Zico scores a spectacular opener against New Zealand

Brazil's first game of the 1982 finals, against the USSR in Seville, was of high quality. Falcao was especially dynamic and influential; Cerezo was hardly missed. Even the wretched refereeing of Spaniard Augusto Lamo Castillo, who should arguably have given two penalties to the Soviets and one to Brazil, could not ruin the spectacle. Alas, the tradition of weak Brazilian goalkeepers would be continued by the shaky Valdir Peres, who allowed a long shot by Andrei Bal to bounce embarrassingly through his arms. Brazil, however, simply shrugged off this setback.

Loping with intent

The towering Socrates, his long legs covering great areas of ground, one minute covering for adventurous left-back Junior, the next striking at goal, was always loping with intent. The USSR, to their credit, held out against the exuberant skills of the Brazilian midfield until 15 minutes from time, when Socrates equalised with a stupendous shot. With two minutes to go left-winger Eder hit the winner with another powerful drive following a dummy by Falcao.

Brazil had an easier task in their next game, again in Seville against a talented but erratic Scottish team, who

WHO WAS WHO

Top row, left to right

Valdir Peres
Goalkeeper who was also a member of Brazil's 1974 and 1978 World Cup squads. Now a youth coach in Brazil.

Leandro
Right-back who spent his entire career with Flamengo. Now runs a hotel in Brazil.

Oscar
Central defender who was also in the 1978 and 1986 World Cup squads.

Falcao
Central midfielder who went on to win Serie A with Roma. Had brief spells in charge of Brazil (1990-91) and Japan (1994). Now a TV pundit back home.

Luizinho
Centre-back who scored twice in 34 appearances for Brazil.

Junior
Attacking left-back who also featured in midfield. Spent most of his playing career at Flamengo, where he also coached for two spells in the 1990s.

Bottom row, left to right

Socrates
Elegant captain, qualified doctor, notable smoker and passionate political activist. Now back working in medicine.

Toninho Cerezo
Midfielder who enjoyed playing success in Italy with Roma and Sampdoria and in Brazil with Sao Paulo, but has had mixed results as a coach.

Serginho
Striker whose skills did not match those of his midfield colleagues. Has since had spells as a coach and media pundit in Brazil.

Zico
One of the stars of the side, dubbed The White Pele. Spent a year as Brazil's sports minister before reviving his playing career in Japan. Coached Japan at the 2006 World Cup. Now in charge of Fenerbahce.

Eder
Left-winger with a fierce shot who often fell out with team-mates and officials.

Preaching the beautiful game...Tele Santana

fought bravely but ultimately waned in the intense heat. Just as the USSR had done, the Scots took a deceptive lead. Right-back David Nairey scored a splendid goal after 18 minutes, bursting through a surprised Brazilian defence after good work by Asa Hartford and John Wark. The Scots had five men in their midfield, but the Brazilian midfield, now including0 Toninho Cerezo, was irresistible.

Still, it was the 33rd minute until Brazil equalised, with one of Zico's famous free-kicks, perfectly swerved from outside the box around the defensive wall and past keeper Alan Rough. On 48 minutes, centre-back Oscar came up for Junior's corner, soared above the defence and headed his team into the lead. "From then on," admitted Scotland's celebrated manager, Jock Stein, "we were really chasing the game." In vain; Eder and Falcao also scored to make it 4-1.

Brazil then brushed New Zealand aside 4-0 and so advanced to the second stage of this strangely-designed competition. They found themselves in a Barcelona-based three-team group with powerful opponents and old enemies Argentina and an Italian team destined, as exemplified by forward Paolo Rossi, to improve dramatically. The match schedule decreed that the group, for all its allure, would compete in the relatively modest Espanyol stadium, while the massive Camp Nou would host the infinitely less attractive group composed of Poland, Belgium and the USSR.

Brazil's first game was against the Argentinians, who had already been beaten 2-1 by Italy. Maradona had been fouled and manhandled out of that game through the malign attention of Claudio Gentile, aided and abetted by inept Romanian referee Nicolai Rainea.

Zico put Brazil ahead after only 11 minutes – driving in the loose ball after a swerving Eder free-kick had struck the underside of the bar – but it would be about an hour before the more talented Brazilians became truly dominant. Gradually, the superb midfield would control the game.

A glorious pass by Zico sent Falcao racing down the right, and when his cross came over, Serginho, always dangerous in the air whatever his failings on the ground, leaped to head it in. Another inspired pass by Zico enabled the vibrantly overlapping Junior to score the third. Zico's "reward" was a brutal foul by Argentina captain and centre-back Daniel Passarella, for which he should have been sent off. Zico hobbled off, and Batista took his place, only to be viciously chopped down by a petulant and frustrated Maradona, who was indeed sent off. Ramon Diaz's goal a minute from time was no consolation.

So to the classic encounter between Brazil and Italy, a match fully worthy to have been the Final. Brazil were strongly favoured to win at a canter, but that was to reckon without Rossi, the rust out of his limbs at last, amnestied to play again after serving two years of a three-year sentence for match-fixing. After poor performances in Galicia in the opening phase, the forward's opportunism would now be irresistible. Even Brazil's superb midfield couldn't make up for the weaknesses behind it and ahead of it.

Triumphs of guile

Keeper Peres had said beforehand that his greatest fear was that Rossi would come to life, and within five minutes he had scored. Ebullient winger Bruno Conti sent full-back Antonio Cabrini flying down the left, and there was Rossi, darting in ahead of the defence to head in the cross. The forward was only a small fellow, and his headed goals were all triumphs of guile, anticipation and speed of movement.

It took just six minutes for Brazil to equalise. Zico, who like Maradona would suffer the Gentile treatment, eventually having his shirt ripped off his back, now went past the defender and sent Socrates clear with one of his superbly angled passes. The angle was narrow but Socrates' shot ripped between Dino Zoff and his near post.

After 25 minutes, a moment of carelessness from Cerezo, a lax pass intended for Junior, enabled Rossi, ever the opportunist, to dart in and put Italy ahead once more. Brazil equalised midway through the second half. Falcao dribbled across the penalty area, saw a gap, spun and beat Zoff with a tremendous left-foot shot.

Brazil replaced Serginho with winger Paulo Isidoro. "Now the ball is round again," Saldanha said in the press box. But the 40-year-old Zoff was in defiant mood, and while Zico had faded, Italy's playmaker, Giancarlo Antognoni, was increasingly effective.

A draw would have put Brazil into the semi-finals, but they were not to get it. In the 75th minute the match was lost and won. First, Zoff fumbled a shot by Cerezo, but snatched the ball back just before Isidoro could swoop. Away went Italy to force a corner. When it was only half cleared, Marco Tardelli drove the ball back into the box and it broke to Rossi, who drove in the winner. ●

FROM THE ARCHIVES

AUGUST 1982

Brazil were artists not failures

Elsewhere, they were burning his effigies along with national flags, banners and drums, but Tele Santana remained as gracious as his team.

The less committed will remember the 1982 Brazilians as artists of colour, beauty and rhythm, not as failures.

They were beaten by an Italian team in the ascendancy – indeed bound for the championship itself – in the outstanding match of the World Cup finals.

To the end they followed the finest traditions of Brazilian football. Italy simply proved they weren't infallible.

Santana admitted he could have adopted tighter tactics, knowing that a draw would have been sufficient to carry his side through to the semi-finals.

But that wasn't the Brazilian way. Certainly, it wasn't the Santana way. He summed up his football philosophy thus: "Players should have the freedom to play. Creativity is the important thing." Wouldn't you like to see those words daubed across the door of every manager and coach?

Derick Alloop reports from Spain

SANTANA GIVES HIS MEN THEIR FREEDOM!

Vandalised

Captain...Socrates

Discuss this at worldsoccer.com/forums

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Defending the indefensible

Referees consistently show bias towards defenders

BLAMING REFEREES for lousy decisions is a built-in part of football, almost like a sport within a sport. It's not just football, the practice is there in every sport (think John McEnroe).

For sure, referees make bad mistakes, and football matches are won and lost on such decisions. FIFA says we have to accept that referees are human, and that therefore they will make mistakes.

I accept that, up to a point, we must just grin and bear it when referees screw up. But there is another type of referee error that I find totally unacceptable – one that is more accurately defined as a refereeing error.

I'm not talking about isolated incidents here, but about an overall pattern of refereeing that is biased in favour of defensive play.

As I see things, it is the obligation of referees to make sure that both defensive and offensive play – and players – are fairly treated, that there is a clear balance between the two. The sport itself comes down to a struggle to upset that balance. In any given game that is the aim of each team – and the idea of the rulebook is that any upsetting be done within the rules of the game.

Rule 12 is the key one here, the one that spells out what players are forbidden to do. Most of the offences listed – e.g. tripping, charging, pushing, holding, illegal tackling – are physical ones that are employed far more frequently by defenders than by attackers (by defenders, I mean, of course, players who are currently defending – the player might nominally be a forward, but it is his role that I am concerned with).

This means that any leniency offered by referees in applying these rules must, automatically, favour defensive play. In the modern game a great deal of leniency is shown by referees. Fouls are not given, cards are not given. In many cases, cards are replaced by a stern lecture from the referee – and where can that exercise be found in the rules? There is no place for a verbal caution, a caution means a yellow card. But referees have found a way of getting round that.

Can I prove the bias I am imputing? I think I can – not with a mass of statistics based on lengthy studies of many games, but with one simple observation that any spectator can relate to.

We see this at virtually every game. While we're waiting for a corner to be taken, all hell is breaking out in the penalty area, players are shoving and holding and yelling and generally carrying on alarmingly. We're not in any doubt that all sorts of fouls are going on – we've all seen a ton of television replays showing holding and shirt-pulling, to say nothing of hugging and neck-locks. Maybe the referee will intervene before the kick is taken – with a verbal warning – but it will be a warning delivered fairly to a player from each side.

So here comes the corner. While it's still in the air, the ref blows for a foul. And this is where my proof comes to life. From everything that I've seen, I'd say that most of the serious fouling in the area comes from the defenders (for one thing, there are more defenders than attackers involved). Maybe I exaggerate – so I'll accept that it's a 50-50 battle. In which case, 50 per cent of the referees' decisions should favour the attacking team – in other words they should be penalty-kicks.

Looking for fouls

No, I don't have any stats in front of me, but I'm quite sure I don't need them to assert that a substantial majority of those referee decisions give a free-kick to the defending team. How can that be? I submit that it is inevitable when referees are actively – and quite possibly subconsciously – looking for fouls by attacking players. Of course they will find them.

I believe that precisely the same sort of bias is at work in the matter of diving. I would say that a majority of the replays I have seen, after yellow cards have been given for diving, reveal a questionable or wrong decision. But there is no leniency here. I've never seen a referee issue a verbal caution to a suspected diver; no sir, straight into the book he goes.

This is particularly frustrating for the player, who is being labelled a cheat and is getting booked for a foul committed against him! The case of Napoli's Marcelo Zalayeta, booked for diving, is instructive. A TV replay proved the referee got it wrong, and Zalayeta's two-game ban had to be cancelled.

The examples I've given – of biased decisions on corners and for diving – are not to be seen as the result of poor judgement from individual referees. They come from referees having adopted, or having been seduced into, a mindset that causes them to be looking for such decisions.

Quite possibly, a defensive bias has always been there, from the very beginnings of refereeing. In a sport where attack was dominant – teams once used five forwards! – it may even have been necessary. Not so today. The referees have been joined by the coaches. Both groups are pro-defence, and the result is a distorted, unbalanced game where a crunching leg-breaking tackle can receive a finger-wagging, but a suspected dive brings a two-game suspension. ●

Illustration by Dave Semple

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Backing the favourites

Brazil prepares to host the 2014 World Cup and England is tipped to land 2018

One-horse race...FIFA president Sepp Blatter unveils Brazil as hosts for the 2014 World Cup

THE WORLD CUP is unique because of the passion it engenders around the globe. It is the most lucrative sports event on the planet and consumes the waking devotions of billions during that climactic five weeks every four years.

Ask any group of fans which two nations should, ideally, host the World Cup and a majority of answers would be the same: Brazil and England.

Brazil because of the uncontestable thrill and delight that the nation has brought to international football down the years and which has won a record five World Cups; England because its schools and universities provided the cradle of the modern game of association football in the 19th century.

Now Brazil has been awarded the hosting rights to the 2014 finals while England is favourite for 2018. Such awards would be long overdue.

Problematic transport, unreliable security, creaking infrastructure and utterly inadequate stadiums are issues that would bar Brazil from welcoming the world back for the first time since 1950 if the finals were to be staged next year. But the only South American bidder in rotation's last gasp has seven years to put all that right.

United States on alert

Not every observer believes Brazil can live up to the challenge. Such doubts will keep the United States, for one, on the alert in case a short-notice replacement from the Americas is needed.

England confronts a different set of challenges after FIFA decided, with 2014, to end the system of rotation of the World Cup. It had been, in any case, only an artifice to ensure that the 2010 finals went to Africa (and, of course, South Africa).

Competing for 2018 is open to the entire world with the exception of Africa and South America. China, moving mountains (literally) for the Beijing Olympics, will want to bid; so will Australia and the United States; possibly Mexico and Japan; so will several other European nations, including probably Russia, possibly Spain and certainly a joint project from Belgium and Holland.

One official from eastern Europe wondered out loud, during a break in discussions during the recent FIFA executive, whether it would not be unfair for England to stage the World Cup only six years after London hosts the Olympic Games. But then,

Up and running...Palestine and Singapore meet in a 2010 World Cup qualifier on October 8

Mexico hosted the Games in 1968 in Mexico City and the World Cup in 1970; West Germany hosted the Games in 1972 in Munich and the World Cup in 1974.

The converse argument works well: England will have updated transport and infrastructure for the Olympics so a World Cup would capitalise on all that investment and administrative knowhow.

This is not the first bid since England hosted – and won – the World Cup in 1966. England started to bid for 1998 but then withdrew in favour of France in return for a clear run to stage Euro 96; but lost out embarrassingly badly in the race for 2006. Third time lucky, maybe?

How green is football?

How large a carbon footprint is association football planting across the globe? FIFA is proud of the environmentally-friendly features of its vast new headquarters on the outskirts of Zurich. But what of its tournaments and sponsor-friendly events?

The thought struck me in the run-up to the main qualifying draw for the 2010 World Cup in Durban. The great and the good – directors, officials, sponsors, TV executives and media – flew halfway around the world or more...for what? To see names pulled out of a hat?

Surely that is absurd, even without being environmentally irresponsible. This little show could be carried out in green-edged Zurich and streamed down the internet.

Of course, a public presence is essential. After all, we would not want FIFA accused of fixing the draw, would we? Doubtless a randomly selected citizens' jury could be drawn from the Swiss public to guarantee fair play.

And how much is there to draw anyway? Oceania's qualifying competition began on August 25, Asia's on October 8, South America's on October 13 and Africa's on October 14. If the Durban shindig is all about only Europe and CONCACAF, we should all have headed off to, say, geographically-convenient Lisbon instead.

Many going to the draw may regard it more as an opportunity to network person to person, the sort of thing people did before the days of e-mails and video conferencing.Maybe.

But global warming will not go away, and football must face up to its responsibilities. Austria and Switzerland have promised an environmentally-friendly European Championship next year. But qualifying competitions rather than finals are the issue.

In the early years of the European Cup, in the pre-jet age, the first round was split into geographical halves to minimise travel problems. Perhaps there is a green case for stepping back in time.

Discuss this at worldsoccer.com/forums

"China, moving mountains (literally) for the Beijing Olympics, will want to bid for 2018; so will Australia and the United States"

Platini courting trouble

MICHEL PLATINI has been wounded by a rejection of part of his plan for Champions League reform by the professional football strategy council.

One of the Frenchman's initial acts as UEFA president in his efforts to democratise European football was to create the strategy council, a talking shop in which all sides of the league game could air their opinions.

But Platini insisted: "It has no decision-making power. All UEFA's decisions are taken by the executive."

So it was intriguing to hear the strategy council's rejection of the cup-winners option in Platini's Champions League reforms, which had been projected as binding. One report had stated: "The changes will be ratified at UEFA's executive committee meeting on December 1." The members of the executive were thus reduced to a bunch of rubber stamps.

In August Platini was asked, when presenting his reforms, what would happen if the strategy council gave it a thumbs-down. Platini responded that everyone had a right to their opinions but he would still put his original before the executive.

The strategy council fiddling would see England, Spain and Italy sending three clubs directly into the group stage rather than the present two; but that goes against Platini's original vision of giving more places to mid-ranking nations.

The strategy council is powered by the leagues while the executive comprises the national associations. If, as expected, the executive backs the strategy council against Platini it will be a major defeat for the president.

Further trouble lies ahead for Platini. In the background, G-14 plans a major expansion which would pick off many members of the virtually defunct UEFA club forum. ●

Champions League dispute...Platini

Dead men walking

Premier League managers have been sacrificed as clubs put short-term profits before long-term stability

ON THE FIRST day of the season I was at Goodison Park, looking into Everton's proposed move from that atmospheric football home to a new stadium on land which – to the profound horror of many of the club's fans – lies just outside Liverpool's official city boundary.

Everton, admirably assembled and managed in borderline-scary fashion by David Moyes, beat Wigan 2-1, and afterwards, mid-August sunshine still heating the terraced streets outside, one journalist asked Wigan manager Chris Hutchings if he was worried he'd be sacked.

The very walls seemed to cringe, but Hutchings maintained his dignity well, pointing out that it was, after all, rather early days. He won the next two games, which took Wigan to the top of the League, but then reality did bite and on November 5, after just 12 matches and following a defeat to Chelsea that dropped Wigan into the relegation places, owner Dave Whelan generously thanked Hutchings for his efforts and sacked him.

Illustration by Dave Semple

Hutchings was, by then, the fourth Premier League manager to go this term, following Jose Mourinho's fallout with Chelsea, Sammy Lee's painful exit at Bolton, and Spurs' undermining of Martin Jol, which garnered for the club a wave of disgust.

Whelan explained that for all Hutchings' virtues and sterling service as Paul Jewell's assistant manager during the club's rise through the divisions, Wigan could not risk falling out of the Premier League (and, Whelan didn't say, out of the money).

Lee was the victim of the same thought process at Bolton. Premier League survival is now worth £40million to clubs in TV money alone, and relegation to the Football League – despite its improved TV deal announced in November – looks more financially arid than ever. Clubs anywhere near the bottom three feel they are taking a huge risk when showing loyalty to their managers, and, if in doubt, they often sack first and consider the alternatives later.

Right replacement?

Quite whether Bolton selected the right replacement in Gary Megson, seen most recently helping out for free at Stoke, was seriously doubted by the club's fans, who are staying away from the Reebok stadium in droves. The revelation from Graeme Souness, who was interviewed for the job, that Bolton were using an agent, Mark Curtis, to help with their search, did not shower the process with credibility. In football circles, Curtis has been known to be Megson's agent.

Curtis' denial, that he was only Megson's "friend" now and had advised him on his previous contract, at Leicester, only in that capacity, did not massively reassure. He may yet be vindicated, though; Megson is, by all accounts, an old-school, sergeant major-ish type of gaffer, but also brings an assiduous modern approach to pre-match preparations, and he could harry Bolton to safety.

The best that can be said about Jol's departure and the arrival of Juande Ramos is that White Hart Lane has seen more dignified days. There was an awful arrogance about the Spurs directors' well-leaked visit to Seville in August to speak to Ramos, a preening assumption that any manager in his right mind would choose an English club over Sevilla. And it scythed Jol's authority. Managers who have obviously lost the respect of their players, or the backing of the directors, are said to be dead men walking, and from then on that was Jol, who last season and in 2005-06 had led Spurs to a fifth-place finish in the League and been the apparent darling of the Lane.

In those good times, when Paul Robinson was keeping goal with confidence, Michael Dawson and Ledley King standing tall at the back, Jermaine Jenas and Aaron Lennon skittering pleasingly in midfield, Jol talked persuasively about the club's policy of basing their future on promising English players, and nobody from the board demurred. Yet this season started badly, and Jol was suddenly a walking corpse. Ramos, poached, arrived with the season a quarter over and Sevilla complaining furiously behind him – not ideal conditions for building a dynasty.

That, still, has to be the intention. Clubs that enjoy sustained prosperity have invariably kept faith with a manager, allowed him not just to sign a few players in his first couple of years but also to oversee coaching, youth development, inculcate a whole philosophy. While Spurs were thrashing around again, a couple of miles away Arsene Wenger was signing a contract until 2011, which, if he sees it out, will make him Arsenal's longest-serving manager. Sir Alex Ferguson, ambition undimmed, was celebrating 21 years at Manchester United, silverware crammed in behind him.

Yet, today, with money so vital at the top and bottom, would an underachieving top-flight club keep faith with a struggling manager for four years without silverware, as United famously did with Ferguson from 1986 until his first FA Cup win in 1990? Or, would Ferguson, like Jol, be a dead man walking after fewer than three? ●

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Into the cauldron...Milan and Internazionale take the field at the San Siro for the controversial 2005 Champions League quarter-final second leg

Share issues

Bitter rivals Milan and Internazionale are united only by the fact that they both use the San Siro stadium. Peterjon Cresswell reports

A BITTER, CENTURY-OLD rivalry at one of the game's greatest arenas in a traditional football capital – that's what will be on offer when Serie A title-holders Internazionale take on European champions Milan at their shared stadium, the San Siro, on December 23. With more than 50 European and domestic trophies between them, the clubs can justifiably claim to represent the most successful football city in Europe, if not the world.

Inter, so long in Milan's shadow, have made a comeback in the aftermath of the *Calciopoli* match-fixing scandal of 2006 and were once again leading Serie A after 11 rounds this term. It promises to make the first Milan derby of 2007-08 potentially equal to the epic battles of 20 years ago, when each club lined up a trio of world stars from Germany (Inter) and Holland (Milan).

The story begins in 1899, when Englishman Alfred Edwards founded Milan Cricket and Football Club for expats and well-to-do Milanese, who would meet over cocktails at the American Bar in town. British influence was still strong as the club evolved into Milan FC, so much so that its Italian and Swiss members met at the Orologio restaurant on March 9, 1908 and agreed to break away to form their own club. Echoing the multi-national nature of their group, they decided on the name Internazionale.

First derby

Thus was born one of football's great city rivalries. Milan FC, later to become AC Milan, won the first championship derby, in January 1909, but Inter romped to 5-0 and 5-1 wins in 1910 on their way to taking the title.

In time, Inter would appeal to high society. The blue-collar followers of Milan are known as the *cacciavite*, or screwdrivers. Inter, in blue-and-black stripes, are the *nerazzurri*; Milan, in red and black, the *rossoneri*.

In the early years Inter played at the Arena, just behind the Castello Sforzesco in the north-west of the centre, now used for junior athletics. Inter's Italian roots found favour with the Fascist authorities. As Ambrosiana-Inter (the name Internazionale was deemed too Leninist), and fired by the goals of the charismatic Giuseppe Meazza, the *nerazzurri* won three titles.

Their rivals were backed by a member of the original Milan FC cocktail set, car tyre magnate Piero Pirelli. He financed the building of a new stadium, in the San Siro district in the west of the city, designed on the English model, with four stands built close to the pitch. The stadium was inaugurated on September 19, 1926, with Inter beating Milan 6-3.

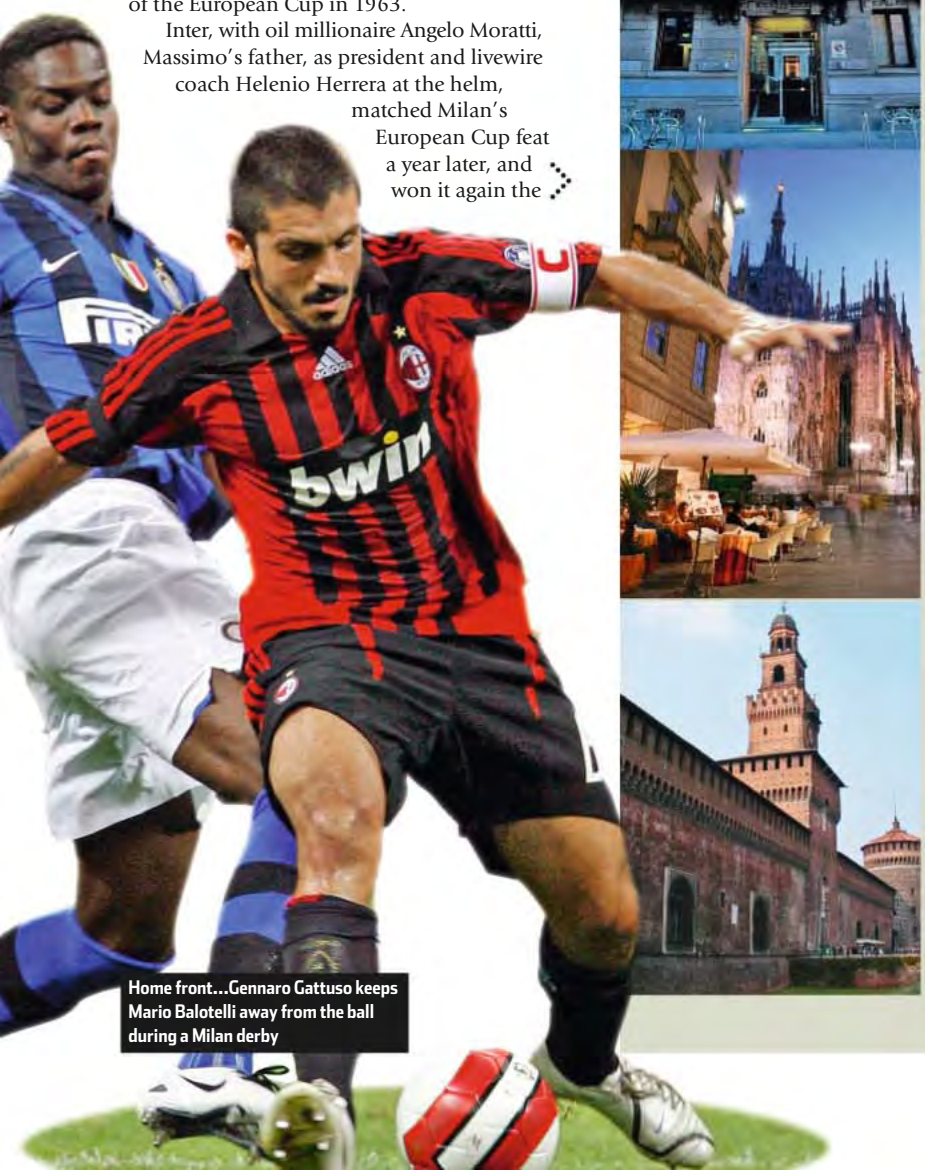
After the war, the San Siro was

> **So strong was the British influence at Milan FC that their Italian and Swiss members agreed to break away and form their own club**

revamped, given another tier and its distinctive candy-twist appearance around the outside. Inter moved in to groundshare in 1947-48, and the San Siro crowd enjoyed some of the greatest derbies – Inter's legendary 6-5 win in November 1949 was the first city clash seen by their current president Massimo Moratti.

But Milan bounced back. After buying top foreign stars such as the Swedish Gre-No-Li trio of Gunnar Gren, Gunnar Nordahl and Nils Liedholm, followed by Jose Altafini and Juan Schiaffino, they won five Serie A titles in 11 years before becoming Italy's first winners of the European Cup in 1963.

Inter, with oil millionaire Angelo Moratti, Massimo's father, as president and livewire coach Helenio Herrera at the helm, matched Milan's European Cup feat a year later, and won it again the



Home front...Gennaro Gattuso keeps Mario Balotelli away from the ball during a Milan derby

SURVIVAL GUIDE

Gothic style

● ARRIVAL & TRANSPORT

Milan has two airports (www.sea-aeroportimilano.it). Malpensa is the main one, a 40-minute journey to central Cadorna metro station on the half-hourly Malpensa Express (top picture). Linate handles mainly short-haul flights and is connected by city bus No 73, journey time 30 minutes. Milan's city transport authority ATM (www.atm-mi.it) runs a three-line metro system, plus buses, trams and trolleybuses. A daily pass is valid for all.

● HOTELS

The mid-range Ariosto (pictured second top) (Via Ariosto 22; +39 02 481 7844; www.hotelariosto.com; €200/£140), with art nouveau touches, is handily located for the San Siro, as is the comfortable and cheaper Piemonte (Via Ruggero Settimo 1; +39 02 463 173; €100/£70). The main APT tourist office (Via Marconi 1; +39 02 7252 4301; www.turismo.milano.it) can help with hotel bookings.

● EATING & DRINKING

Milan is a business city. Deals are closed over lunch or drinks in the evening, and neither will be particularly cheap. Rice is more prevalent than pasta, butter more than olive oil. To try a risotto milanese, head to Da Abele (Via Temperanza 5; +39 02 261 3855; evenings only) or the 180-year old Trattoria Madonnina (Via Gentilino 6; +39 02 8940 9089). The pricey Bistrot Duomo (Via San Raffaele 2; +39 02 877 120) has views of the cathedral. The intimate Osteria delle Vigne (Ripa di Porta Ticinese 61; +39 02 837 5617) offers decent, cheap lunches.

Bars and nightclubs around the fashionable Corso Como include footballers' hang-out Hollywood (No 15; +39 02 659 8996) and the Casablanca Cafe (No 14; +39 02 6269 0186). More laid back is the scene around the canals, where you'll find the football-themed Osteria del Pallone (Viale Gorizia 30). Back in town, the English Football Pub (Via Valpetrosa 5) is filled with souvenirs.

● DAYTIME ENTERTAINMENT

Any sightseeing tour must begin with the Duomo, the vast Gothic cathedral (pictured second bottom). Take the lift to the top for breathtaking views as far as the Alps. The Castello Sforzesco (bottom picture) is a monolith built in the mid-1300s. After falling into disrepair, it reopened as a museum in the early 1900s. Today, it houses Egyptian sarcophagi and masterpieces of the Renaissance. By day you can tour the vast opera house, La Scala (www.teatroallascala.org).

Milan is a fashion capital – Via Montenapoleone and Via Manzoni are the sites of the flagship Gucci, Gianni Versace and Louis Vuitton stores, and the Giorgio Armani superstore.

following season. Milan also won a second European Cup, in 1969, but neither club could sustain their success. It took Silvio Berlusconi's television millions to revive Milan in the late 1980s, with the hiring of adventurous coach Arrigo Sacchi and the purchase of Dutch stars Ruud Gullit, Marco Van Basten and Frank Rijkaard. Inter had German World Cup winners Lothar Matthaus, Jurgen Klinsmann and Andreas Brehme. Milan won the title again in 1988, Inter a year later. There were good times for the stadium, too, with a £50million revamp for the 1990 World Cup.

Pressing game

Milan went from strength to strength, with Franco Baresi and Paolo Maldini at the back, and classy foreigners such as Dejan Savicevic, Zvonimir Boban and Marcel Desailly. The *rossoneri's* high-tempo pressing game won them *scudetto* after *scudetto* and entertained even Berlusconi's neutral viewers. The high point was the 4-0 win over Barcelona in the 1994 Champions League Final.

Milan still spells success, despite occasional dips in form and involvement in *Calciopoli*. The current side, under Carlo Ancelotti since 2001, includes world-class players such as Kaka, Clarence Seedorf and the evergreen Maldini.

Inter spent almost two decades in the doldrums, despite serious investment from Moratti and the arrival of Ronaldo (now at Milan) and Christian Vieri. They lost on "away" goals to Milan in the 2003 Champions League semi-finals and lost again two years later in the quarter-finals, the second leg abandoned when Milan keeper Dida was felled by a firework thrown by an Inter fan with the *rossoneri* leading 3-0 on aggregate.

But Inter, not involved in *Calciopoli*, were named champions in 2006 after Juventus and Milan, who had finished first and second, were punished for their part in the scandal. Last term, Inter won Serie A again, on the field and easily, though Juve had been demoted to Serie B and Milan docked points. This season, Inter, still under the able Roberto Mancini, are flying high again, on the back of goals from Swede Zlatan Ibrahimovic. ●

Milan, I hate you...Inter fans make the message clear

THE STADIUM

Inside the San Siro

Landmark...the stadium's distinctive "candy-twist" exterior

Close encounter

The San Siro is named after the district west of the city centre where, in the 1920s, Milan president Piero Pirelli commissioned a football-specific stadium – no running track and a stand on each side.

It staged a semi-final of the 1934 World Cup and was acquired by the City of Milan in 1939, when the corners were filled in to raise capacity to 55,000.

In 1955 a second tier was added, plus the distinctive walkways around the outside, which create a candy-twist appearance.

Capacity was now over 85,000, with 60,000 seated. For the 1990 World Cup, a plexiglass roof with red girders was added, as well as a third ring, and an all-seated capacity of 85,000, which remains to this day – although security measures have recently restricted this to 83,000.

Eleven concrete towers are dotted around the ground, four supporting the roof. Fans hang almost over the pitch in the steep-sided tiers. Such intimacy allows for one of the most fiery atmospheres in Europe. The Curva Nord is the Inter fans' traditional area, Milan fans have the Curva Sud.

For the San Siro, take the M1 metro line to Lotto, where shuttle buses run the short trip to the stadium.

Tickets for Inter can be booked at www.inter.it, Milan at www.acmilan.com. The average second ring seat is about €30 (£20). You can tour the arena and museum during the day if there is no major event on. The tours (+39 02 404 2432; www.sansirotour.com; €12.50/£8.70) start at Ingresso 14, where there is also a souvenir shop.

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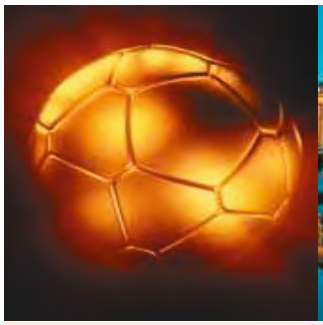
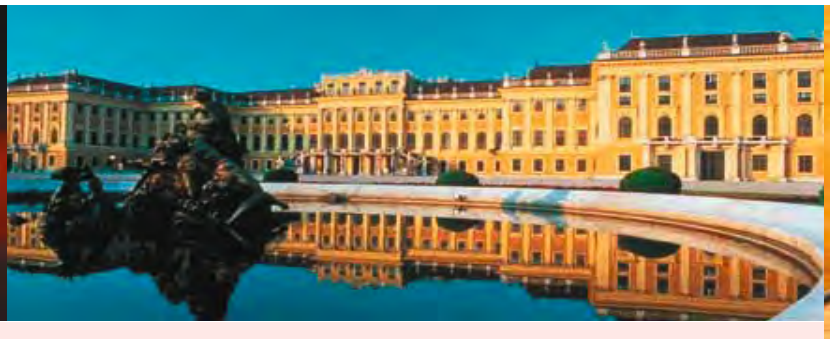
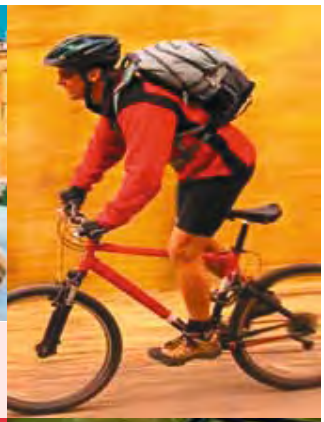

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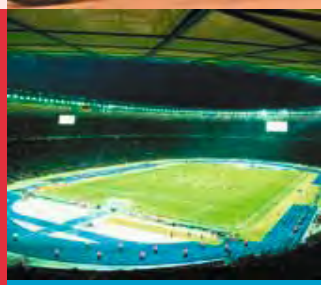

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Up and down...Mohsen Hamidi of Iranian side Sepahan gets above Urawa Reds' Tadaaki Hirakawa during the Asian Champions League Final second leg, but the Japanese team went on to win 3-1 on aggregate

Home fire...Martin Palermo (right) is mobbed after scoring for Boca against Velez Sarsfield in the domestic opening championship, which runs until just before the Club World Cup

Boca's global vision

BOCA JUNIORS ARE placing great importance on this year's Club World Cup – just as they and all the other South American participants always used to take its forerunner, the Intercontinental Cup, very seriously, and much more so than their European rivals. And for those Boca players who are not members of the national team, the trip to Japan will be considered one of the highlights of their career.

Boca won the Intercontinental Cup, also known as the World Club Cup, three times and now, as South American club champions for the sixth time following their Libertadores Cup Final victory over Gremio in June, they are ready to taste success in Japan once again.

Yet despite the importance placed on achieving global success, Boca also have domestic commitments until shortly before the tournament. The opening championship, in which they were second, three points behind Lanus, with three games to play, was due to finish on the weekend of December 2/3, just 10 days before their first Club World Cup game.

Although Boca did not make the wholesale changes before the opening campaign that many Argentinian clubs make between domestic championships, they lost their best player, Juan Roman Riquelme.

The playmaker, who returned to Villarreal after a loan period at Boca, will be badly missed in Japan. He was, after all, instrumental in the Libertadores Cup triumph.

Boca used Riquelme behind the strikers in a 4-3-1-2 formation, but Leandro Gracian, bought to replace him, has not repeated the form he showed as playmaker at Velez Sarsfield. So while coach Miguel Angel Russo has persisted with Gracian, he has now switched to a more straightforward 4-4-2.

Fortunately for Boca, they can still call upon 18-year-old Ever Banega, who is comfortable in any midfield position. But while he can be a trump card, he has also had disciplinary problems.

Russo has used another youngster, Nery Cardozo, in midfield ahead of the experienced Sebastian Battaglia,

Goal target...Palermo

who can be brought on as a stabilising influence.

The defence lacks height since the departure of two other players after the Libertadores victory – Daniel Diaz (to Getafe) and Clemente Rodriguez (to Espanyol). On top of that, goalkeeper Mauricio Caranta does not cope well with high crosses, something that has not been such a problem in the domestic league, in which Boca's defence is still the strongest despite the departures, but that opponents could exploit in Japan.

Up front Boca's best strike partnership is Rodrigo Palacio and 34-year-old Martin Palermo. The latter is now somewhat cumbersome but he is close to becoming the club's all-time leading scorer – the target figure of 182 may even be reached in Japan.

Palacio provides mobility in the forward areas, though Boca also tend to play an attacking game with wide players moving quickly down the flanks.

Russo, whose position is under threat unless he wins a title this year, says that sometimes his team try to do things too quickly. Riquelme used to dictate the rhythm, slowing it down when required. Also, the eagerness to attack can leave holes at the back. Nevertheless, Boca are more than capable of rising to the big occasion in Japan.

Eric Weil

Trump card?...Banega

Prize to fight for...the Club World Cup trophy

Ch-ch-ch-ch-changes

ANOTHER YEAR, another format change for a tournament with a chequered history and that has gone by several names – Club World Championship, World Club Cup, the Intercontinental Cup and, thanks to long-standing sponsors, the Toyota Cup.

The early stages of last year's six-team tournament were played in front of half-empty stadiums. Only the Final, won by Internacional over Barcelona, had a capacity crowd at the 67,000-seater Yokohama International stadium. So this year, in a bid to boost attendances, FIFA had intended to introduce the Japanese league champions as a seventh team – except that Urawa Red Diamonds, who were on the brink of clinching the domestic title as we went to press, will already be competing as Asian champions.

So, instead, the local team place will now be taken by Iran's Sepahan, who lost to Urawa Reds in the Asian Champions League Final.

In addition, it was decided to drop the fifth-place play-off match, which last year was watched by only 23,000 at Tokyo's 57,000-capacity National stadium, and to play the third-place play-off immediately before the Final to ensure a decent crowd.

FIFA has increased the prize money by £500,000, with a total of £8million now up for grabs. The champions will take home £2.5m, the runners-up £2m, the third-placed side £1.25m, the fourth-placed £1m, the two fifth-placed teams £500,000 and the seventh-placed team £250,000.

The world body has also confirmed that it will use the tournament to continue the experiment with goal-line technology first trialled at the 2005 Under-17 World Cup in Peru. A new version of the "chip-in-ball" developed by Adidas will be "tested" in Japan, a FIFA spokesman said. However, plans to employ an extra set of assistant referees as goal-line officials have been scrapped because the International Board has not yet given its approval.

THE TEAMS

Boca Juniors

Milan

Etoile Sahel

Urawa Red Diamonds

Pachuca

Waitakere United (in white)

Sepahan

BOCA JUNIORS
South American champions and three-times winners of the world title.
Coach: Miguel Angel Russo. Former Estudiantes player who succeeded Ricardo Lavolpe at the start of this year.
Key man: Ever Banega. Teenage midfielder who was one of the stars of Argentina's Under-20 World Cup success this summer.

MILAN
Last season's UEFA Champions League winners have been struggling in Serie A this term but have performed efficiently in the Champions League group stage, notching up wins over Benfica and Shakhtar Donetsk.
Coach: Carlo Ancelotti. The former Italy midfielder has overseen two Champions League wins at the Milan helm, to add to his two European Cup successes as a player.
Key man: Kaka. The Brazilian is favourite to be named world player of the year next month.

ETOILE SAHEL
The Tunisians surprisingly beat holders Al Ahly of Egypt in the African Champions League Final in early November.
Coach: Bertrand Marchand. The Frenchman joined the club in May this year from league rivals Club Africain.
Key man: Amine Chermiti. The teenage striker's goals were crucial in Etoile's Champions League success.

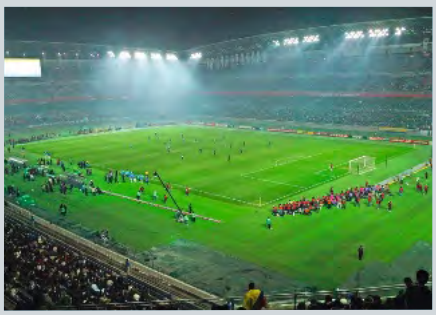
URAWA RED DIAMONDS
Japan's richest and best-supported club secured their first continental title when beating Iran's Sepahan in the Asian Champions League Final.
Coach: Holger Osieck. Veteran German who is in his second spell at the club.
Key man: Washington. Brazilian striker who has been a prolific scorer in the J.League.

PACHUCA
Mexico's oldest club and most successful of recent times. Won this year's CONCACAF Champions Cup and last year became the first club from Central or North America to win a South American confederation title, the Sudamericana Cup (the continent's equivalent of the UEFA Cup). Nicknamed Los Tuzos (the gophers).
Coach: Enrique Meza. Experienced former national team boss who has overseen unprecedented success since taking over in 2006.
Key man: Gabriel Caballero. Argentina-born veteran attacking midfielder in his third spell at the club.

WAITAKERE UNITED
The New Zealanders were the inaugural winners of the O-League, the successor to the Oceania Club Championship, narrowly beating Fijian champions Ba in the Final.
Coach: Chris Milicich. Local man who won the New Zealand title with Mount Wellington as a player.
Key man: Neil Emblen. Former Wolverhampton, Crystal Palace and Walsall midfielder who now plays in defence.

SEPAHAN
The first Iranian side to reach the Asian Champions League Final, in which they were beaten by Urawa Reds. The Esfahan-based club are traditionally the third power in Iranian football behind Tehran clubs Pirouzi (also known as Persepolis) and Esteghlal, but have grown in stature in recent years.

Coach: Luka Bonacic. Croatian with a reputation as a tough disciplinarian.
Key man: Moharram Navidkia. Team captain who has experience of European football from a spell in Germany with Bochum.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MATCH SCHEDULE

Preliminary play-off
Dec 7 Sepahan v Waitakere United (Tokyo)

Quarter-finals
Dec 9 Pachuca v Etoile Sahel (Tokyo) (Q1)
Dec 10 Urawa Red Diamonds v play-off winners (Toyota) (Q2)

Semi-finals
Dec 12 Boca Juniors v Q1 winners (Tokyo)
Dec 13 Milan v Q2 winners (Yokohama)

Third-place play-off
Dec 16 (Yokohama)

Final
Dec 16 (Yokohama)

GERMANY

Stuttering Stuttgart

Here we go again...Stuttgart's defence can't prevent Fabio Santos scoring as Lyon inflict another Champions League defeat on Armin Veh's side

SUCCESS IN STUTTGART should come with a government health warning. Every time they win the Bundesliga, a slump is just around the corner.

The Swabians failed to qualify for Europe in the season after their title triumphs of 1983-84 and 1991-92, and they look like emulating that feat this term. Armin Veh's side were only ninth after 13 rounds, having lost six times, and poor form in the Champions League – they are out of contention after losing their first four group matches – only added to the sense of crisis.

There are many reasons for their poor showing. Excellent young prospects such as midfielders Sami Khedira and Roberto Hilbert have gone off the boil; two key players – stopper Matthieu Delpierre and national team midfielder Thomas Hitzlsperger – have suffered long-term injuries, while muscular problems have prevented star striker Mario Gomez finding his best form; Mexican defensive midfielder Pavel Pardo seems exhausted; and the usually steadfast Portuguese centre-back and skipper Fernando Meira has become error-prone.

As for the summer recruitment drive, that can be described only as an unmitigated disaster. Keeper Raphael Schafer has proved an unworthy successor to Timo Hildebrand, now at Valencia, playmaker Yildiray Basturk has spent most of the autumn on the sidelines with a damaged thigh, and Brazilian attacker Ewerthon is clearly out of condition.

Confidence levels, so high only a few months ago when Stuttgart surprisingly snatched the Bundesliga crown, have quickly drained away. Many of the players are showing poor concentration, and Veh has to solve the problem of his side's slow starts, which have often caused them to concede in the opening half-hour. Expect general manager Horst Heldt to open the chequebook during the January transfer window, with seasoned pros at the top of his wish list.

National team coach Joachim Low has been handed a new and improved contract until the 2010 World Cup finals as a reward for steering Germany to Euro 2008 with three qualifiers to spare. "Initially, Joachim did not want to discuss his future before the end of next year's European Championship," said federation chief Theo Zwanziger. "But we're delighted to have persuaded him to change his mind." Low's annual salary jumps from £1million to £1.75m and from now on he will have a greater say on representative football at all levels and in the training of national coaches.

One of Low's most pressing concerns is the fitness of Werder Bremen midfield battler Torsten Frings, who missed the first three months of the season with damaged ligaments in his right knee then broke down with the same injury a few weeks after his comeback in October. Frings is likely to be out until the new year.

This is a severe blow to Werder, who along with Hamburg, have looked to be the only teams capable of challenging Bayern Munich for the Bundesliga title.

The second round of the German Cup threw up two giantkillings, holders Nurnberg losing on penalties to lowly second division Carl Zeiss Jena, and Hertha Berlin going down to regional league side Wuppertaler.

Nick Bidwell

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HOLLAND

Koeman takes his chance

Back to Spain...Ronald Koeman adjusts to his new surroundings in Valencia after leaving Eindhoven

JUST TWO WEEKS after Henk Ten Cate left Ajax for Chelsea, Ronald Koeman quit another of Holland's top teams, champions and leaders PSV, for Valencia. The former national team defender had been on the Spanish club's wish list in the summer but at the time he thought it would be better to stay in Eindhoven. However, according to Koeman, the situation changed when Valencia fired Quique Sanchez Flores. "If you get a chance in football you've got to take it," he said. So far, Koeman has never seen out any of his coaching contracts.

A big reason for joining Valencia is that, in theory, being in La Liga will give him a better chance of fulfilling his long-term goal, coaching former club Barcelona.

Assistant Jan Wouters took temporary charge, but started badly with a 2-1 defeat at Heerenveen, which allowed Ajax and Feyenoord to leapfrog PSV in the table.

Another big figure bowed out when Jaap Stam announced his retirement. The 35-year-old Ajax defender, who won 67 caps, appearing at a World Cup and three European Championships, said he could no longer cope with playing the game, physically or mentally.

The highlight of Stam's club career was a three-year spell at Manchester United, during which he won the Champions League in 1999. However, he was forced to leave by Alex Ferguson in 2001 after his autobiography, *Head To Head*, revealed United's dressing room secrets. Ferguson later said he regretted his decision, terming it the biggest mistake of his career.

Willem II's Dennis Van Wijk was the first top-flight coach to get his marching orders this season. Poor results were the main reason but he was also clearly at odds with some of the players. The final straw was a 2-1 home defeat by lowly VVV Venlo, when the fans called for Van Wijk and the board to be sacked. One fan's frustration boiled over as he punched defender Frank Van der Struijk on the head. Assistant Andries Jonker has been appointed caretaker.

National coach Marco Van Basten also came in for abuse during Holland's 2-0 Euro 2008 qualifying win over Slovenia in Eindhoven. He was booed by the fans, who were mindful of the 1-0 defeat in Romania four days before and unhappy about a mediocre second-half performance against the Slovenes. They also chanted the name of Foppe De Haan, who has twice steered the Under-21s to European Championship triumph and dared to criticise Van Basten's unstinting use of a 4-3-3 system.

Klaas-Jan Droppert

PORTUGAL

Porto less than perfect

Porto's 100 per cent league record was ended when they could manage only a 1-1 draw at home to Belenenses in the ninth round.

Benfica, also unbeaten, narrowed the gap on the champions to six points when beating Pacos Ferreira 2-1 away. That followed two other 2-1 wins, away to bottom side Uniao Leiria and home to Maritimo.

Sporting Lisbon were a further point back, having secured their biggest win of the season, 4-1 at home to lowly Naval. Brazilian striker Liedson scored twice and then took his club tally to 101 with another brace against Roma in a 2-2 Champions League draw.

Sporting Braga, who are usually in the running for a UEFA Cup place, fired coach Jorge Costa after a 1-1 draw away to Naval left them only in mid-table. Paulo Duarte resigned at Uniao Leiria following a 3-1 home defeat by Nacional, the side's sixth loss of the season. Leiria turned back the clock by appointing Vitor Oliveira, who previously led the club in 1997-98, as Duarte's replacement.

Pedro Pinto

AUSTRIA

Kraft works

Helmut Kraft has revived bottom side Wacker Innsbruck after his appointment as sporting director following the sacking of coach Lars Sondergaard.

The talented but inexperienced team failed to win any of their first 15 league games this season, but under Kraft, who led tiny SV Ried to runners-up spot last season, Wacker managed victories over Austria Wien and champions Salzburg in his first two home games at the helm.

The sporting director has also persuaded former Germany midfielder Hans Muller to become a talent scout and was negotiating with Frenkie Schinkels to join as head coach. Schinkels led Austria Wien to the league title in 2006.

Harry Miltner

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Drogs have their day

Drogheda United won the League for the first time, clinching the title with three games to spare with a 2-1 home defeat of Cork City.

St Patrick's Athletic, the early pacesetters who were overtaken by the Drogs in July, beat off Cork and Bohemians to take runners-up spot.

Cork will play Longford Town in the FAI Cup Final on December 2 after wins over Bohemians and University College Dublin respectively.

England assistant manager Terry Venables emerged as the favourite for the national team manager's job after Steve Staunton's contract was terminated in the wake of the disappointing home draw with Cyprus in the Euro 2008 qualifiers in October. The former Liverpool and Republic defender was in charge for only 17 games.

Pat Fenlon, who quit as manager of Derry City earlier this season, is the new manager of the national Under-23s.

Sean Creedon

LIECHTENSTEIN

Vaduz on the rise

Vaduz won three games in a row to rise to third place in the Swiss Challenge League (second division). Brazilian striker Gaspar, who hit his 13th goal of the season in a 5-1 defeat of Kriens, has signed a contract extension until 2010.

Graeme Crawford

Oops...Zuberbuhler lets in Bradley to score

BELGIUM

Cercle join the Club

Pointing the way...De Boeck has made an impressive start at Cercle

THESE ARE GOOD times in Bruges, with Club Brugge going top of the table and ground-sharing rivals Cercle rising to third.

The latter are normally in or just above the relegation zone at this stage of the season, and much of the credit for their remarkable upsurge must go to new coach Glen De Boeck. The former national team defender took the reins this summer after a spell as assistant at Anderlecht, and his run of good results included a 0-0 draw with his old club, the defending champions.

Club Brugge took advantage of three consecutive draws by Standard Liege to leapfrog them after winning three in a row.

Anderlecht coach Frankie Vercauteren lasted only three more games after the draw with Cercle. A 2-0 defeat at Germinal Beerschot, which left the team seven points off the pace, proved the final straw, though a continuing lack of success in Europe also contributed. Vercauteren, who won two league titles with Anderlecht, has been temporarily replaced by assistant Ariel Jacobs.

The top division club presidents have voted to scrap the league winter break from next season.

Nicholas Harling

SWITZERLAND

St Gallen turn to Balakov

EX-GRASSHOPPER coach Krassimir Balakov has taken charge of struggling St Gallen after further weeks of crisis. The Bulgarian replaced caretaker coach Rene Weiler, who had needed police protection from irate fans after a 2-0 cup defeat by second division Gossau. Weiler had only just taken over from Rolf Fringer, sacked after St Gallen dropped to the bottom of the League.

Pascal Zuberbuhler's chances of keeping the No 1 jersey at Euro 2008 took a hit when his blunder late in the friendly against the United States in October allowed Michael Bradley to score the only goal. Meanwhile, coach Kobi Kuhn has injury worries about Alexander Frei, the team's main striker and captain. Frei failed to regain full fitness after undergoing a hip operation in May and has now had surgery on a groin injury.

Ivar von Rulach

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Feeling champion...IFK players and officials celebrate as sporting director Hakan Mild hoists the league trophy

SWEDEN

IFK back in power

IFK GOTHENBURG came out on top in a nail-biting finish to the League to win their first title for 11 years. Gothenburg and Djurgardens were level on 46 points going into the final round, but while IFK comfortably took care of Trelleborgs 2-0 at home, Djurgardens suffered a shock 1-0 home defeat by Brommapojkarna, who were already doomed to relegation.

Kalmar, 2-0 victors over AIK Stockholm, nipped in to take the runners-up spot instead. Gothenburg, unbeaten in their final 14 games, extended their record title tally to 18, three more than Malmo. But they must say farewell to goalkeeper Bengt Andersson, who announced his retirement at the age of 41 after clinching what was his first championship medal.

Helsingborgs blew hot and cold as the season ended, following up a 4-0 defeat at Gefle by trouncing Halmstads 9-0 on the final day. Henrik Larsson was the star of the show, scoring one goal and creating three others.

Malmo, who finished only ninth, named Roland Nilsson as their new coach, replacing Soren Akeby. Nilsson, part of the Sweden team that finished third at USA 94, had been in charge of GAIS Gothenburg since 2002.

Pentti Hietanen

ICELAND

Olafur on board

Olafur Johannesson, who led FH to a hat-trick of league titles from 2004 to 2006, has been appointed national coach in a two-year deal after the FA decided not to renew the contract of Eyjolfur Sverrisson.

Johannesson resigned at FH at the end of this season, when they lost the title to Valur.

Sverrisson had a distinguished international career as a player, including a 19-game spell as captain. But he won only two of his 14 games in his two years in charge of the team and presided over some of the poorest performances of recent times. These included shipping eight goals in two games against Latvia and a 3-0 defeat by Liechtenstein.

Valur forward Helgi Sigurdsson was named Iceland's player of the year.

Rab Christie

Discuss this at worldsoccer.com/forums

FINLAND

Tampere still on top

Tampere United clinched their second consecutive league title with several games to spare but coach Ari Hjelm has already moved to strengthen the squad further with the signing of Brazilian striker Rafinha from relegated Oulu.

Haka were runners-up, a superb feat for a club with such a small squad.

Pentti Hietanen

ESTONIA

Levadia retain title

Defending champions Levadia Tallinn secured their third title in four years

when beating Maag-Tammeka 3-0 in snowy Tartu in the penultimate round.

The team also won the Cup in May, but coach Tarmo Ruutli was not particularly enamoured. "I wouldn't call it a perfect season," he said. "Yes, we have won the domestic Double, but we played poorly in the Baltic League [the tournament for top sides in Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia], one of our targets this season. And we failed to reach the third qualifying round in the Champions League."

Ruutli now has to turn his attention to replacing five key players set to leave – goalkeeper Artur Kotenko, defender Vitoldas Cepauskas, midfielders Konstantin Vassiljev and Marius Dovydenas, and forward Ats Purje.

Andres Must

LATVIA

Ventspils win it in second half

For the second season in succession, Igors Slesarchuks scored the goal that secured the league title for Ventspils as they beat Skonto Riga 1-0 away in the penultimate round.

The holders had a weak first half to the campaign but caught their second wind in July, after which they won 11 games in a row. Ventspils drew their final game to finish two points clear of Metalurgs Liepaja.

"We won the title because we were united. It was not a year for individuals – the whole team contributed," said coach Roman Grigorchuk. "In the middle of the season we looked at the table and knew we could take the title if we won 11 matches in a row. It was a lot to ask but we did it."

No teams were relegated this season as the top division is expanding from eight clubs to 10.

Andres Must

SCOTLAND

Tangerines appeal

Dundee United emerged as candidates to take third place in the League behind Celtic and Rangers after winning their three games in October, including a 2-1 defeat of the Ibrox side.

The Tangerines' inspirational captain, midfielder Barry Robson, was rewarded with a national team call-up.

Also, United are within two wins of their first silverware since the Scottish Cup in 1994 after beating Hamilton 3-1 in the League Cup quarter-finals.

Alan Fairley

WALES

Holders bow out

Cup holders Carmarthen Town crashed out in the third round this time round, 2-1 at second level Newport YMCA, despite the hosts having their keeper sent off. Connah's Quay Nomads were the other big fallers, losing 2-0 to second level Guilsfield. It was Guilsfield's second top-division scalp, having beaten Airbus UK in the previous round.

Mel Thomas

NORTHERN IRELAND

Linfield lose it

Champions Linfield's 4-0 defeat at struggling Dungannon Swifts was their heaviest in the League for 12 years and their first since the opening game of last season. It also meant they were knocked off top spot as Glentoran, Cliftonville and Newry City all leapfrogged them. Swifts, meanwhile, celebrated a first win over Linfield, after 15 attempts.

Newry are the season's surprise package. The manager, 35-year-old Gerry Flynn, has built a fine footballing side since taking charge of the frontier club last January in his first managerial post. Key players include keeper Robert Robinson, defenders Cullen Feeney and Emmett Friars, midfielders Sean Friars (Emmett's brother) and 22-year-old captain Richard Clarke, and striker Stephen Garrett.

Roy Kitson

NORWAY

Helstad makes sure

THORSTEIN HELSTAD scored four goals as Brann clinched the league title with a 5-2 trouncing of Viking in their final home match to spark a week of celebrations. The Bergen club had as good as won their first crown since 1963 when beating Lyn 3-1 three weeks earlier, but the party could not get into full swing since they lost next time out at Aalesund.

Captain Martin Andresen, however, announced he would not be renewing his contract, which had just expired, saying he wanted a new challenge. The following day the midfielder and national team skipper was unveiled as player-manager of Oslo club Valerenga on a three-year deal.

Stabaek pipped Viking for the runners-up spot by finishing with two 5-0 wins, home to Tromso and at Stromsgodset. Strikers Daniel Nannskog and Veigar Pall Gunnarsson scored 35 goals between them this season.

Rosenborg, the defending champions, finished only fifth, prompting the resignation of coach Knut Torum. Assistant Trond Henriksen has taken charge on a temporary basis.

Start were consigned to relegation along with bottom side Sandefjord after losing 4-1 at Lyn on the final day while Odd Grenland, the other relegation candidates, beat Fredrikstad 2-0 at home to complete a hat-trick of wins under new Danish coach Ove Flindt Bjerg. However, Odd Grenland then lost to Bodo/Glimt in the relegation/promotion play-off.

Molde and Hamarkameratene, both relegated last term, booked a quick return to the top flight.

Lillestrom beat second level Haugesund 2-0 in the Cup Final.

Sigurd Odegaard

Goal spree...Helstad

Right Royal champions...Brondby

DENMARK

Royal League on hold

THE START of the fourth edition of Scandinavia's Royal League has been postponed until next year because no TV deal has been agreed. The tournament, always won by Danish clubs so far, had been due to start this month, and the delay is a massive and perhaps terminal blow to a competition set up to boost the finances and strength of the elite Scandinavian clubs.

Brondby's victory over FC Copenhagen in the third-edition Final in March gave succour to a club who were struggling in the Danish League. But Brondby have been in the doldrums again this term and have just managed to climb out of the relegation zone after a five-match unbeaten run.

After 15 rounds they were eighth, 12 points adrift of Copenhagen, the leaders, champions and winners of the first two Royal League crowns. Copenhagen were runaway Superliga winners last term but this season has been far more competitive, with Midtjylland, AaB, OB and Horsens all within three points of the top.

Jim Holden

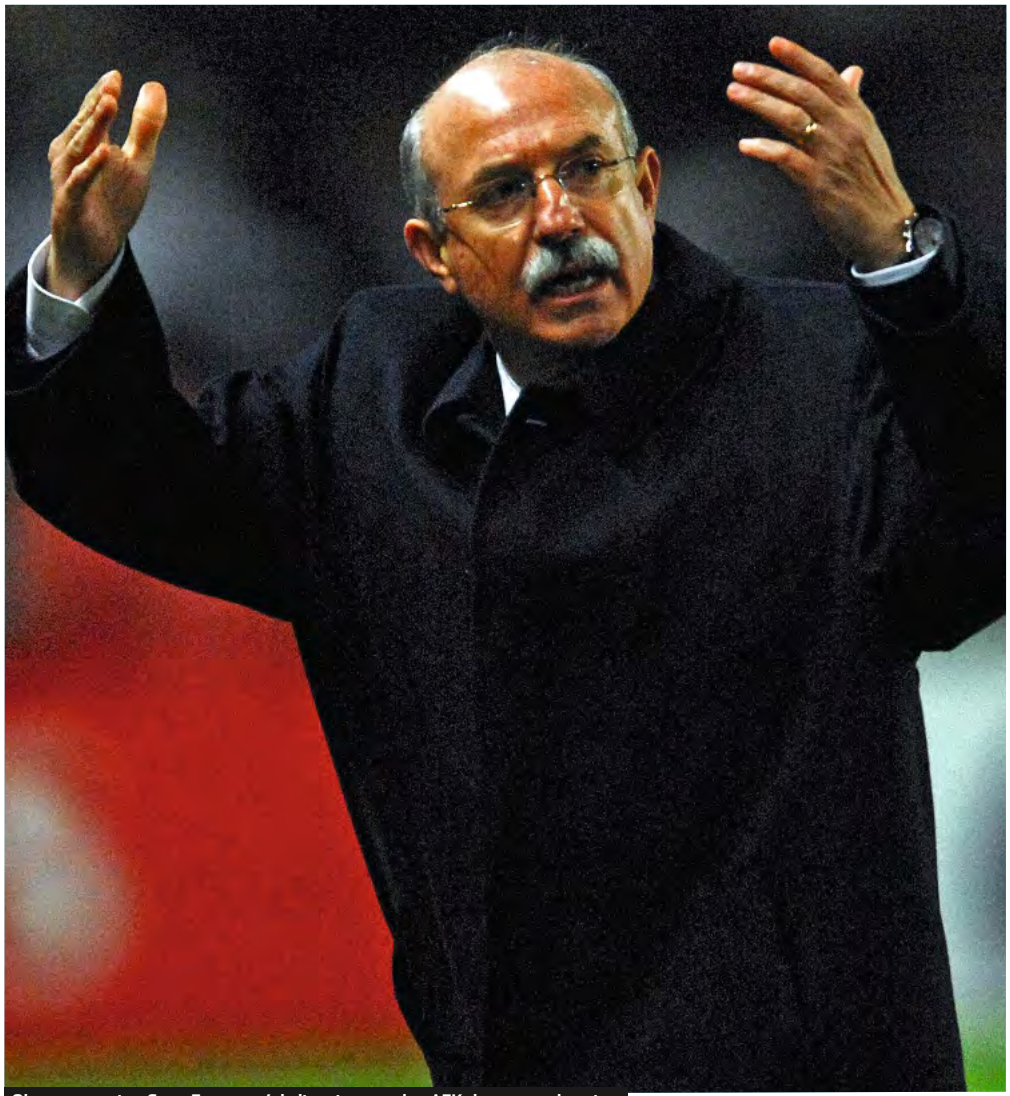
GREECE

AEK handed home truths

AEK ATHENS' winning run since the start of the league campaign was surprisingly brought to an end at home by lowly Iraklis, 2-1, in the seventh round. It was also the first time the leaders had conceded a goal.

Emerson put the visitors ahead in the seventh minute, and although Nikos Limberopoulos equalised just before the half-hour, AEK just could not find a second, despite creating many chances. They paid the price when Rodrigo scored for Iraklis with eight minutes remaining. "It was a good match with a bad result," said AEK coach Lorenzo Serra Ferrer. "I can't remember a match when we had so many opportunities."

Lou Economopoulos



Oh no, not again...Serra Ferrer can't believe it as another AEK chance goes begging

MONTENEGRO

Petrovic pulls out

Buducnost coach Sasa Petrovic resigned after his team lost 3-2 at home to Grbalj to fall six points behind leaders and arch-rivals Zeta. Former Buducnost centre-forward Mojas Radonjic was appointed caretaker and won his first game in charge, 2-0 against Sutjeska. Serb Branko Babic, formerly with OFK Belgrade and Cukaricki Belgrade, was set to sign as Petrovic's long-term replacement as we went to press.

The national team beat Estonia 1-0 away in a friendly in October, the first time they had kept a clean sheet in their seven games since the country became independent. In-form Roma striker Mirko Vucinic scored to maintain his goal-a-game record in four appearances.

Central midfielder Nikola Drincic, a member of Serbia's Under-21 side that finished runners-up at the European Championship in Holland, has opted to play for Montenegro.

Vladimir Novak

CROATIA

Violence on the streets

As the police have cracked down on hooliganism within stadiums, the violence has spilled on to the streets, with a number of incidents over the past month.

Dinamo Zagreb's ultras, the Bad Blue Boys, ambushed Hajduk Split's equivalent, Torcida, on a stretch of the road that runs between their respective cities; a masked gang attacked a group of Bad Blue Boys in Slavonija; and four Torcida members attacked a bus carrying Cibalia fans on their way home from Split.

Former Hajduk captain and forward Frane Matosic has died at the age of 89. Matosic played for the club from 1935 until 1956, interrupted by one-year spells at Bologna and BSK Belgrade. He scored 149 league goals.

Zdravko Reic

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Player boycott goes on

A number of leading players have continued to boycott the national team as they seek changes in the way the federation is run.

Coach Fuad Muzurovic did not call up the rebels for previous matches in the hope they would resolve to return of their own accord. Then, when he changed tack and invited the players to come back for the latest Euro 2008 qualifiers, Emir Spahic, Zlatan Bajramovic, Sasa Papac and Kenan Hasagic all said no.

The boycott has undoubtedly been

a big factor in the team's poor performances in the qualifiers.

Zdravko Reic

SLOVENIA

Trouble at Maribor

Maribor, the former champions, are going through a crisis. At the start of the season the role of sporting director was given to former national team star Zlatko Zahovic, who promptly replaced coach Marijan Pusnik with his friend Milka Djurovski. However, Djurovski was forced to resign after supporters, dissatisfied with results and poor performances, broke into a training session and demanded changes.

Zdravko Reic

MACEDONIA

Sakiri recalled

Former national team captain Artim Sakiri was recalled to the squad after a 12-month absence for the final Euro 2008 qualifiers against Croatia and Israel. Another veteran, Igor Jancevski, was also invited back, having not appeared since March. "I called them up because of their experience and personalities," said coach Srecko Katanec, who is considering an offer to extend his contract, which ends this month.

Champions Rabotnicki Kometal were still unbeaten after 13 league rounds and eight points clear of closest challengers Milano, now under Gjore Jovanovski. His predecessor, Bilbil Sokoli, took charge of Renova after Vlatko Kostov quit.

Nikola Kostov has been appointed general secretary of the federation.

Michel Stojmanovski

MALTA

Sliema draw alongside

Sliema Wanderers drew level on points with surprise leaders Floriana after a 1-0 home defeat of champions Marsaxlokk in the eighth round of matches. However, Floriana had a game in hand and a better goal difference. Marsaxlokk were three points adrift in third.

Domenico Aquilina

SERBIA

Kosanovic quits shaky Red Star

Slipping up...Red Star's Ibrahima Gueye goes to ground during the UEFA Cup defeat by Bayern

MILORAD KOSANOVIC quit as coach of champions Red Star Belgrade after shaky form in the domestic league and defeats in the first two UEFA Cup group ties. Kosanovic, who had been in charge for only three months, was under pressure after consecutive 1-1 draws against promoted sides Napredak and Mladost Lucani. A 3-0 defeat at Aris Salonika, following a 3-2 loss at home to Bayern Munich, all but put paid to their chances of reaching the UEFA Cup knockout stages and was the final straw for the coach.

Vojvodina Novi Sad proved their good early-season form was no flash in the pan when holding leaders Partizan to a 3-3 draw in Belgrade. Under-21 midfielder Gojko Kacar hit a hat-trick for the visitors. Vojvodina narrowed the gap to two points next time out as they beat Banat 1-0 while Partizan were held 1-1 at home by Cukaricki.

Legendary goalkeeper Srdjan Mrkusic, one of the founders of Red Star, has died at the age of 92.

Vladimir Novak

New deal...but 75-year-old Baric took a pay cut

ALBANIA

Carry on, Baric

VETERAN NATIONAL team coach Otto Baric has been handed a two-year contract extension after his side produced some impressive performances in the Euro 2008 qualifiers. Albania lost only narrowly, 1-0, at home to Holland in September, conceding in the 90th minute, then drew 0-0 in Slovenia and 1-1 at home to Bulgaria in October. But the 75-year-old Croat, currently serving a three-game touchline ban for insulting the referee during the Bulgaria game, accepted a pay cut because his age was a sticking point in negotiations.

Baric also promised to rejuvenate the team. To this end, he met state president Bamir Topi to ask for a relaxation of passport rules, which would allow more young players with Macedonian or Kosovan roots to qualify to play for Albania.

Gezim Nushi

Discuss this at worldsoccer.com/forums

RUSSIA

Zenit feeling tops

Hands on...Zenit's Konstantin Zyrianov (right) gets some help in hoisting the trophy after clinching the title

ZENIT ST PETERSBURG won the League for the first time since 1984, their only other triumph, when beating Saturn 1-0 away on the final day. They finished two points clear of Spartak Moscow, who beat city rivals Dinamo 2-1 to take the runners-up spot for the third year running. Defending champions CSKA Moscow were third.

The final league round was marred by an ugly episode during the Khimki v Kryliya Sovetov match. Kryliya's French-Cameroonian defender Serge Branco walked off in protest at racist abuse directed towards him from Khimki fans. Kryliya had already used all their substitutes by that point and so had to play out the game, a 4-1 defeat, with 10 men.

Kuban Krasnodar joined southern neighbours Rostov in the drop, despite winning 3-2 at Lokomotiv Moscow. Their replacements are second level champions Shinnik Yaroslavl and Terek Grozny.

The latter, from the turbulent Chechnya area in the south of the country, are back in the top flight after two years in the second division. And there are hopes that they will once again be able to play games in their home city after being forced into exile for 13 years. The local authorities could not guarantee the security of spectators because of the ongoing conflict in the region, which has been seeking independence. But the fighting has died down in recent times.

A new, 17,000-seat stadium is currently under construction in Grozny, and it could be completed in time for the new season, which kicks off in March. However, the security guarantees have not yet been provided.

Terek won the Russian Cup in 2004, when they also won promotion to the top division, but they had a disastrous campaign the following year, finishing bottom after losing 20 of their 30 games. Andrei Fedkov, scorer of the cup-winning goal, is still spearheading Terek's attack at the age of 36, and one of Grozny's streets has been named after him.

Victor Gusev

UKRAINE

Dynamo raise spark

Dynamo Kyiv's 2-1 win over league leaders and arch rivals Shakhtar Donetsk may be just the spark the struggling champions need to turn their season round.

The victory, under caretaker coach Oleh Luzhnyi, was in total contrast to all that had gone before at the crisis-ridden club. Luzhnyi, previously the assistant, stepped up after veteran Josef Szabo was forced to quit because of heart problems after just a month in charge, during which he had failed to turn fortunes around. The 67-year-old had been appointed to replace Anatoliy Demyanenko, sacked after Dynamo's poor start to the season. But the miserable run continued, including a humiliating 1-0 home defeat by promoted Naftovyk-Ukrnafta, another 1-0 home defeat by Metalist Kharkiv and losses to Sporting Lisbon (2-1) and Manchester United (4-2) in the Champions League.

Luzhnyi, the 39-year-old former

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Dynamo and Arsenal defender, was a favourite with the fans during his playing days and was appointed the No 2 in June last year after a brief spell as player-coach at Latvia's Venta.

He could not stem the tide as Dynamo were thrashed 4-0 by United in the return but his stock rose with the win over Shakhtar, although his club were still third, seven points adrift.

Oleg Zadernovsky

CZECH REPUBLIC

Mokry has 2020 vision

FA chairman Pavel Mokry has announced plans for a joint Czech Republic-Slovakia bid to host the European Championship in 2020. He described the bid as a duty to future generations, adding that Prague's candidacy to host the 2016 Olympics could boost the chances of success.

Slavia Prague stayed top of the League but suffered embarrassing defeats in the Cup and the Champions League. The players were fined £1,300 each after losing 4-3 to fourth-tier amateurs Lisen in the third round of the domestic competition. The 7-0 mauling by Arsenal two weeks later was Slavia's heaviest loss since 1963. "I was watching the clock and wishing it was over," admitted coach Karel Jarolim.

Goalkeeper Martin Vaniak was subsequently dropped in favour of Michal Vorel, while Tunisian Tijani Belaid was demoted to the reserves because of a "poor attitude" in training.

Referee Jaroslav Jara has been suspended until the end of the year after sending off Mlada Boleslav forward Tomas Sedlacek for what he thought was a second booking at Banik Ostrava. Jara had earlier booked team-mate Petr Vorisek but written Sedlacek's number in his notebook.

Ladislav Skorpil has retaken the reins at Slovan Liberec, replacing Michal Zach, while Frantisek Komnacky has succeeded Lubos Kozel at Jablonec.

Sam Beckwith

POLAND

Stadium stir

The mayor of Warsaw, Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz, has caused a stir by suggesting that the city's Euro 2012 stadium should be built outside the centre instead of at the planned location, next to the defunct 10th Anniversary stadium. She claims such a relocation would allow the central land to be sold off, thus virtually funding the stadium costs.

However, FA chairman Michal Listkiewicz has said any decision about changing the stadium site would need UEFA approval.

Czeslaw Michniewicz was fired as coach of defending champions Zaglebie Lubin after telling a journalist he would be interested when told Los Angeles Galaxy were considering approaching him to fill their vacant coaching post.

Dariusz Kurowski

HUNGARY

Bids in for Ferencvaros

Two foreign investors have announced interest in buying Ferencvaros – record title holders but now in the second division – their Ulloi ut stadium and the six hectares of land around it. The British Scarborough Property Group and an unnamed Belgian real estate developer, which put in its tender at the last minute, are likely to hear the result before Christmas.

Peterjon Cresswell

BULGARIA

Two own goals for Kishishev

Nightclub escapade...Kishishev

NATIONAL TEAM defender Radostin Kishishev had an October to forget, having been fined £700 for visiting a Sofia nightclub four days before the Euro 2008 qualifier against Albania, in which he scored an own goal.

The Leeds player apologised for his night-time escapade, saying: "I am sorry that it happened. Everybody knows that I don't drink alcohol and don't smoke. I was there with friends."

Coach Dimitar Penev forgave Kishishev enough to start him against Albania. However, in the 32nd minute the ball cannoned in off his knee to put the visitors ahead, and even though Dimitar Berbatov equalised late on, the draw virtually ended Bulgaria's hopes of reaching the finals.

Penev said: "Some of the players think they are permanent fixtures but I will stop including them in the squad. They play well for their clubs but forget their qualities in the national team."

Levski Sofia, the country's most popular side, have been invited to join the G-14 grouping of leading European clubs.

Rumen Paytashev

Into the Steaua hot seat...Lacatus

ROMANIA

Lacatus's turn

STEAUA BUCHAREST are on to their third coach of the season with the appointment of former national team striker Marius Lacatus to replace Italian Massimo Pedrazzini. The latter, who will now serve as assistant, held the reins for only a few weeks following the resignation of Gheorghe Hagi, who had claimed club owner Gigi Becali was trying to interfere in team selection.

Lacatus, part of Steaua's 1986 European Cup-winning side, was himself recently sacked by UTA Arad after a string of poor results. But Becali expressed no doubts, saying only: "It's Lacatus's turn now."

New Rapid Bucharest coach Mircea Rednic has received a hostile reception from the fans because he led arch-rivals Dinamo Bucharest to the league title last season. Rednic replaced Italian Cristiano Bergodi in October.

CFR Cluj have lined up their 19th foreigner, Mikael Dorsin, who will become the highest-paid player in Romania. The Sweden defender has signed a three-and-a-half-year deal, worth £1.2million, which will begin in January after his contract with Norway's Rosenborg expires.

Fiorentina's Adrian Mutu was abused by Lazio fans during a recent Serie A game because of his nationality. Italy's Romanian community has been in the spotlight following the murder of a 47-year-old woman in Rome, allegedly by a Romanian. "It's not normal to blame an entire country for the crimes committed by some of its individuals," Mutu said.

Radu Timofte

ARGENTINA

Shining lights Lanus close in on first title

Making an impact...Agustin Pelletieri (top) and Diego Valeri celebrate another Lanus goal

LANUS have come within striking distance of winning their first league title, leading the opening championship by three points with three games to go.

A Lanus triumph would be a good thing for Argentinian football, whose clubs are generally are all too quick to fire coaches or make wholesale team changes. Coach Ramon Cabrero is the longest-serving boss in the League, having held the post since October 2005, and only three of the 23-man squad did not come through the club's youth teams, of which he used to be in charge. Not surprisingly, Lanus have been the least active in the transfer market, and are also one of the few top-flight clubs not in the red.

Lanus' health is in stark contrast to relegation-threatened Newell's Old Boys, now in receivership with heavy debts and who have just lost their second coach of the season, Ricardo Caruso Lombardi. Their first, Pablo Marini, "resigned" after being attacked by the club's hooligan gang boss in the dressing room. The gang supports president Eduardo Lopez in exchange for free tickets and cash inducements, such as percentages of transfers. It helps Lopez if coaches are forced to quit since he need pay no compensation, as he would if they were fired.

Some of the gang are agents for the players and press coaches to put them in the team to improve their value. Many players have left because, having opted not to sign with a "gang" agent, they had no chance of a first-team place.

Argentina won both their first two World Cup qualifiers 2-0, at home to Chile and away to Venezuela, but neither performance was convincing. Both goals against Chile came from free-kicks by Juan Roman Riquelme, and though teamwork was better against Venezuela, Diego Maradona complained there was too much back-passing. "Lionel Messi dribbles past opponents for 40 metres up the field only to pass it back 40 metres to [defender Gabriel] Heinze," he said.

National coach Alfio Basile complained about the state of the pitch at River Plate's Monumental stadium, the only one authorised to stage World Cup games. The venue has been used for a number of rock concerts, causing the turf to be churned up.

Eric Weil

BRAZIL

Sao Paulo still supreme

Sao Paulo made sure of retaining the national championship with four matches to spare when beating bottom club America-Natal 3-0. Muricy Ramalho's team conceded only 13 goals in 34 matches as they left a group of clubs headed by city rivals Santos trailing in their wake.

There were ugly incidents in Curitiba following Atletico Paranaense's 2-0 win over Gremio. Players and officials were involved in a brawl in the tunnel, and Atletico midfielder Claiton was left with stud marks across his waist from a karate kick. Trouble resumed the following day at the city's airport when the clubs' paths crossed again.

Brian Homewood

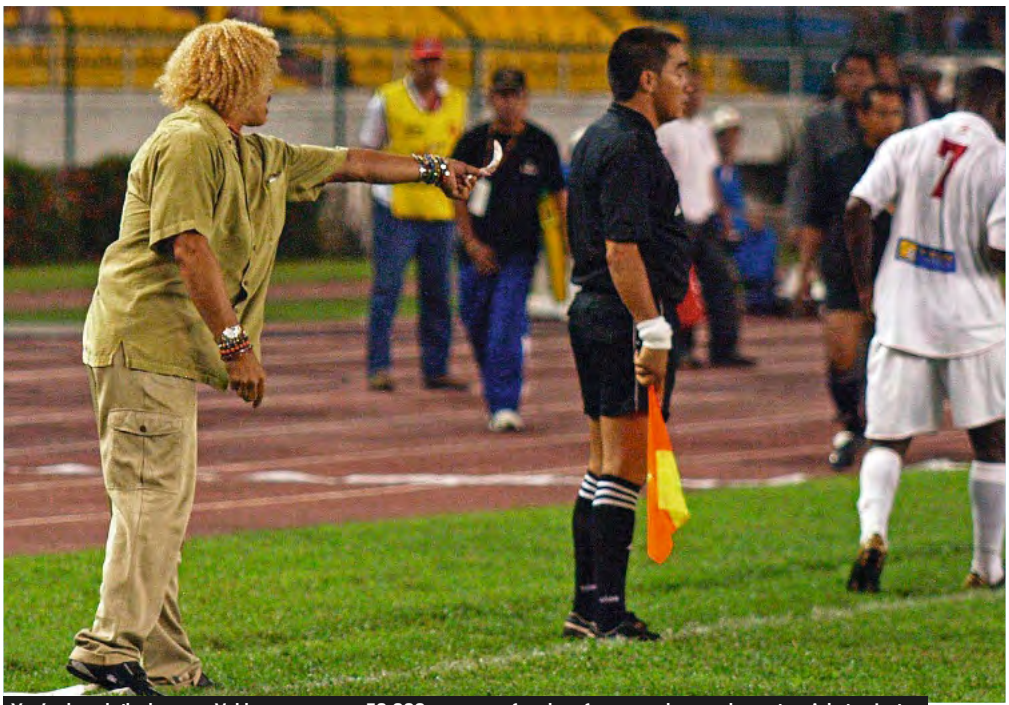
Discuss this at worldsoccer.com/forums

CHILE

Medel arrested for drink-driving

Chile midfielder Gary Medel has been arrested for drink-driving. The Universidad de Chile player, a member of the Under-20 World Cup squad and who has since been promoted to the senior national team, ended up on the pavement in the Santiago district of Bellavista following an accident in the early hours. Unfortunately for him, it all happened in front of a police post.

"I want to apologise to my team-mates, the technical staff, the fans and all the members of this



You've been bribed...angry Valderrama waves a 50,000 peso note after the referee awards a penalty against Atletico Junior

COLOMBIA

Hooligan hotspot

THE COUNTRY has been hit by a wave of football violence, with two serious incidents within a few days of each other and another averted by police.

The first outbreak was during Atletico Junior's 3-1 home defeat by America Cali, when angry Junior fans tried to break down the fence separating them from the America supporters, then clashed with police.

The match was held up for five minutes and then called off with a minute to play as missiles rained down on an America player as he tried to take a corner. To add to the mayhem, Carlos Valderrama, Atletico Junior's assistant coach, was sent off for waving a 50,000 peso note (worth around £12.50) at referee Oscar Ruiz after he awarded the visitors a penalty.

The following matchday two teenagers were seriously injured as America and Atletico Nacional fans fought in the streets outside the Pascal Guerrero stadium in Cali shortly before the game. Atletico's team bus was stoned as it neared the ground, injuring two players.

A possibly more serious incident was averted by police who intercepted two buses carrying Independiente Medellin fans to their team's game at Deportivo Cali. An inspection uncovered two guns, a baseball bat, a variety of knives and a hand grenade.

"It was an arsenal for a war," said Marco Antonio Pedreros, head of Medellin police. The hooligans are believed to have been planning action for five months, after clashing with Deportivo Cali supporters at a roadside restaurant on the Cali-Manizales highway.

Brian Homewood

institution [Universidad] for my conduct," Medel said.

These are not good times for the youngster. Earlier this year he was banned for six matches for spitting at an opponent, and is currently out of action with a knee injury.

Brian Homewood

ECUADOR

End for Hurtado?

Defender Ivan Hurtado's international career could be over after he was left out of the squad for the World Cup qualifiers against Paraguay and Peru, apparently following a row with coach Luis Fernando Suarez.

Hurtado, 33, has won a record 145 caps, played at six Copa Americas and in five World Cup qualifying campaigns, including the first two ties of the current one.

Brian Homewood

CANADA

Maestracci steps up

Canadian Soccer Association vice-president Dominic Maestracci was named interim president following the sudden exit of Colin Linford in August. An election for a long-term appointment is scheduled for next May.

Meanwhile, former CEO Fred Nykamp is suing the CSA for wrongful dismissal.

Toronto FC coach Mo Johnston has been handed a two-year contract extension despite the team picking up only 25 points from 30 games in their inaugural season in Major League Soccer. "We feel Mo has done a sound job of identifying talent and bringing in players who could become the foundation of our franchise," said vice-president Tom Anselmi.

Philippe Germain

UNITED STATES

Yallop out, Gullit in

EVERYTHING SEEMS set for an outburst of sexy soccer next year in MLS. As yet, nobody has any idea what that means, except that it's an invention of Los Angeles Galaxy's new coach, Ruud Gullit, and that David Beckham will be chief purveyor.

It certainly sounds right, exactly what you'd expect from the Hollywood glamour that now surrounds the club. That atmosphere proved too much for the previous coach, Frank Yallop, who staged a bizarre resignation after an equally bizarre game, staged to raise money for southern California residents who had lost their homes in the wildfires.

After the game, in which Galaxy beat a Hollywood United side 12-4, Yallop suddenly announced he was quitting. But the move was hardly a surprise. For quite a while Yallop had been showing signs of exasperation in having to deal with the complications of having an (unfit) superstar in his squad.

"Too many people telling Yallop what to do," was a frequently-heard phrase. In the end, this quiet, decent man opted for a saner life. He will take charge of the new San Jose Earthquakes club.

Gullit will have to reorganise a poor Galaxy team who have failed to make the play-offs for the past two seasons, and learn the intricacies of MLS – its salary caps and player draft.

The day after Yallop's resignation, Bruce Arena, the USA's most successful coach, abruptly left his job with New York Red Bulls.

Arena's 15-month reign produced a rather dull team that won nothing, but managing director Marc De Grandpre said they had expected him to win the championship in his first full year.

Paul Gardner

Tough task...Gullit takes over at Galaxy

J, OK...trophy-holding Urawa Reds captain Keita Suzuki celebrates with his team-mates after they proved that a Japanese club does have what it takes to achieve continental success

ASIAN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL

Reds letter day

JAPAN'S EIGHT-YEAR trophy drought in Asia's principal club competition was ended when Urawa Red Diamonds beat Iran's Sepahan 2-0 at home in Saitama following a 1-1 draw in Esfahan. No J.League side had even got beyond the group stage since the Champions League was created in 2002; Jubilo Iwata were the last Japanese winners of the competition's forerunner, the Asian Club Championship, in 1999.

The country is renowned for having the strongest league in Asia, so the lack of success in continental competition suggested that it was just not a priority for Japanese sides or perhaps that they were simply complacent.

But Reds signalled early on that winning the Asian title was one of their main aims of the year, and they topped their group unbeaten to break Japan's knockout-stage hoodoo.

Kawasaki Frontale made it a J.League double in the last eight, but while they lost to Sepahan, the Saitama team marched on, beating holders Chonbuk Motors of South Korea in the quarter-finals and then another Korean side, Songnam Ilhwa, in the semis.

It is fitting that Reds are the team to finally take the trophy back to Japan. Backed by the might of the Mitsubishi corporation, they are one of the financial heavyweights of the Asian game. But allied to that is a passion and a vision for success rarely seen in Asian club football.

It was that drive to achieve something monumental that coach Holger Osieck addressed the day before the second leg. He said: "I think, in particular in the Saitama area, when you see what's going on here, the development, the commitment the people are displaying to the game, and how normal people are becoming involved in football, then it's not just a game. It has become a social factor, and therefore if we do it tomorrow then the entire region will get a tremendous boost."

Reds had won the domestic Double last season under Guido Buchwald. His departure prompted the club to turn to Osieck, another German, who had previously led Reds in 1995-96, since when he had had a spell in charge of the Canadian national team.

Osieck's team had laid the foundations for the continental victory in the first leg, when Robson Ponte had given them an important away goal just before half-time, Mahmoud Karimi equalising two minutes after the break.

In the return, Reds welcomed back inspirational defender Marcus Tulio Tanaka, who had been injured for the Esfahan tie, and he forced a fine save out of Abbas Mohammadi after eight minutes. Quarter of an hour later, Reds were in front, Yuichiro Nagai latching on to Robson Ponte's through ball and crashing a shot into the roof of the net.

Sepahan, who had beaten the UAE's Al Wahda in their semi, probed and tried to find a way through Reds' defence, and Moharram Navidkia was in fine form, but Luka Bonacic's side were to end the night frustrated. With 19 minutes to go, Yuki Abe put the result beyond doubt when he headed home from close range after Mohammadi had parried a Nagai shot.

"There's not a lot of time to celebrate because our schedule is very tight," said Osieck, referring to the fact that his team were still on course for a treble also comprising the J.League title and Japan's Emperor's Cup. "But I think it's really a day to celebrate because this is really something special. We have achieved something really great, something that has never been done before in Japan."

Michael Church

Discuss this at worldsoccer.com/forums

ROUND-UP

ASIA

● Four SOUTH KOREAN internationals have been given a one-year national team ban for breaking a curfew during July's Asian Cup.

Goalkeeper and captain Lee Woon-jae, forwards Lee Dong-gook and Woo Sung-yong, and central defender Kim Sang-sik visited a bar during their escapade in Jakarta on the eve of South Korea's 2-1 group stage defeat by Bahrain.

Lee Woon-jae, the hero of Korea's penalty shoot-out win over Spain in the 2002 World Cup quarter-finals, was also ordered to do 80 hours' community service and will not be allowed to play in any tournament organised by the Korean FA for three years. The other three have a two-year ban from FA events.

● Al-Najma won the Super Cup in BAHRAIN, beating Riffa 3-2 after extra-time.

● QATAR'S Al Gharafa beat Al Shamal 2-1 to take their winning run to seven games and increase their league lead to seven points.

Michael Church & Azam Mahmood

OCEANIA

● NEW ZEALAND opened their World Cup qualifying campaign with a 2-0 win over Fiji in Lautoka. The All Whites' greater experience proved crucial, Ivan Vicelich and Shane Smeltz coolly converting the team's best scoring chances, whereas the Fijian strikers panicked whenever in shooting positions.

New Zealand, Oceania's top-ranked country, were given a bye to the round-robin second stage, while New Caledonia, Fiji and Vanuatu qualified by finishing in the first three at the South Pacific Games, which doubled as the first stage of the World Cup qualifiers.

● In the OCEANIA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE, Tahiti's Mana Ura lost back-to-back games in New Zealand (against Auckland City, 6-0, and holders Waitakere United, 2-1) to lose virtually all chance of progress from the group. Fiji's Ba, runners-up in the previous Champions League, opened their account this time with a 1-0 home win over Vanuatu side Tafea, who had already drawn 1-1 away to Kossa of the Solomon Islands.

● NEW CALEDONIA'S Magenta extended their winning run in the Super Ligue to five when defeating Mont Dore 3-2. They led champions Baco by two points.

Paul Moon

National team ban...Lee Woon-jae

JAPAN

Gamba get teenage kicks

GAMBA OSAKA won the League Cup for the first time with a 1-0 defeat of Kawasaki Frontale at the National stadium in Tokyo. The goal was scored by 19-year-old Michihiro Yasuda, who also took the most valuable player award.

Gamba manager Akira Nishino was full of praise for the youngster, a product of the club's youth system, saying: "Yasuda is a very offence-minded player, speedy, with good attacking sense. In fact, he's the perfect utility player: he played on the left today but is also very effective on the right, and at the back as well."

Gamba also won the Super Cup, but looked set to once again miss out in the League, trailing defending champions Urawa Reds by five points with three games remaining.

Mike Plastow & Yumiko Nagae

Ousted...Culina

AUSTRALIA

Sydney rise after Culina cull

BRANKO CULINA was the first coaching casualty of the A-League season when sacked by Sydney FC because of the team's sluggish start.

His successor is John Kosmina, who is renowned for his motivational skills, though he was unable to sit on the bench for the first four games since he was serving a ban imposed in February when in charge of Adelaide United. Nevertheless, Sydney won the first two of those games to rise to fifth.

Sydney have been further boosted by the arrival of former England Under-21 international forward Michael Bridges, on loan from Hull City.

Paul Moon

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL

Etoile triumph on ugly night

BOTTLES RAINED DOWN on both victors and vanquished and the referee was felled in chaotic scenes at the end of the African Champions League Final second leg in Cairo.

Angry supporters of Al Ahly, the holders, pelted their team's coach, Manuel Jose, and struck out at the players of winners Etoile Sahel of Tunisia as they walked up to receive their medals and the trophy.

Etoile's shock 3-1 win came after Moroccan referee Abderahim El-Arjoune sent off home team defender Emad Al-Nahhas and denied Al Ahly a legitimate-looking penalty.

Afterwards, El-Arjoune, who showed great fortitude in an intimidating atmosphere, was punched to the ground by both Al Ahly substitutes and supporters.

Also, Etoile captain Sabeur Ben Frej was thrown down the stairs as he went up to receive the trophy from Egypt's state president Hosni Mubarak, who had a clear view of the violence from his bullet-proof box.

Jose, who previously could do no wrong in the eyes of the Ahly fans, was pelted with bottles and traded insults with supporters as he walked up the stairs.

The match itself had been an exciting affair, with Etoile pulling off one of the biggest upsets in recent Champions League history. The Tunisians were given little chance of denying Al Ahly a record sixth African title and unprecedented third in a row having been held to a 0-0 draw in Sousse two weeks before. However, they took the lead on the stroke of half-time. Mouri Ogunbiyi, winner of two previous Champions Leagues with Enyimba of Nigeria, crossed for Ben Frej to drag the ball back to an unmarked Afouane Gharbi, who fired past Essam Al-Hadari.

It was the first goal conceded at home by Al Ahly in this year's tournament, but they were level just five minutes into the second half. A free-kick by Angola midfielder Gilberto found the towering Al-Nahhas, who powered his header home.

But the wheels came off 10 minutes later when Al-Nahhas held back the pacy Amine Chermiti to earn himself a red card.

Al Ahly, still facing an away goals defeat, were forced on the offensive – and Etoile took advantage, scoring twice on the break in the five minutes of stoppage time, through Chermiti and Moussa Nary, to win the trophy for the first time.

Mark Gleeson

Mayhem...Etoile's Ben Frej and Ghazal are jostled as a stool thrown by a fan flies by

New surface...Djibouti's national stadium received one of the FIFA pitches

FIFA pitches in

A TOTAL OF 21 artificial pitches have been laid in Africa, most of them in national stadiums, as part of an initiative to improve the playing conditions on the continent. All but South Africa, the 2010 World Cup hosts, of the continent's 53 FIFA members are to receive an artificial surface as part of the world body's "Win in Africa with Africa" campaign, and 14 more of the countries will have theirs in place by the end of the year.

The installation of the pitches, which cost about £350,000 each, could signal the start of a marked improvement in the standard of matches in Africa. Most countries have been forced to play World Cup or African Nations Cup qualifying ties on deteriorating, poorly-maintained pitches. Indeed, some teams, including Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Ivory Coast, have hosted key matches on surfaces barely playable, thus providing little entertainment for the fans.

The situation has contributed to the rise of a new generation of players who are physically strong but have limited technical ability.

Mark Gleeson

ROUND-UP

● Former Zagreb coach Josip Kuze has been appointed to lead RWANDA on a two-year contract.

● Rabah Saadane has returned for a fourth spell as national coach of ALGERIA, replacing Frenchman Jean-Michel Cavalli.

● Costa do Sol won the MOZAMBIQUE League for the first time in six years, seeing off previous winners Desportivo Maputo.

● Dutch coach Jan Brouwer has been fired by ANGOLA'S Primeiro Agosto after they finished runners-up in the League and lost in the cup semi-finals. Brouwer achieved the Double with the army club in 2006.

● SIERRA LEONE striker Mohamed Kallon took temporary charge for the 1-0 win over Guinea-Bissau in a World Cup first stage qualifier. The former Internazionale and Monaco player had unsuccessful trials with English Premier League clubs Portsmouth and Birmingham in August and September. Sierra Leone are seeking a new coach having sacked John Jebbor Sherington after a dismal Nations Cup.

Mark Gleeson

Cutting a dash...Sami FA president Leif Isak Nilut (left) and vice-president Hakan Kuorak sport traditional dress for the New Federation Board meeting in Geneva

Top of the world

THE SECOND Viva World Cup for non-FIFA members will be staged next July in the Swedish part of Sapmi, otherwise known as Lapland.

The announcement was made at the fourth annual assembly of the New Federation Board, the organisation for non-FIFA members, in Geneva at the end of September.

The Sami, the people of the Sapmi region, were the only contenders to host the event. Their representative team beat the amateur Monaco side 21-1 in the Final of the inaugural VWC at Hyeres in southern France in November 2006. The problem now is likely to be attracting a decent amount of competitors for next year's tournament. Only three teams played in the first edition (hosts Occitania were the other) after the NF Board fell out with original hosts Northern Cyprus, who staged a rival event at the same time and poached entrants such as Greenland and Tibet by agreeing to pay travel expenses.

Next year's VWC will be held from July 7-13 at Gallivare-Malmbergets FC, which has three grass pitches, one synthetic pitch and two training fields. The plan is to take advantage of the 24-hour daylight at that time of year. "The opening game will be played under the midnight sun, between 11pm and 2am," said NF Board secretary Jean-Luc Kit.

The Sami, an indigenous tribe of northern Scandinavia, have 20,000 members in Sweden, the largest grouping outside Norway, where there are 40,000. Gallivare hosted last year's Sami Cup, a tournament for clubs from the region.

Two new members

Football associations from the Maltese island of Gozo and Casamance, an autonomy-seeking region in Senegal, were admitted as members of the NF Board at the Geneva meeting.

Alvin Grech, secretary of the Gozo FA, said: "We are hoping to go to Sapmi. There should not be any problems with the Maltese FA."

Greenland's manager, Jens Tang Olesen, added: "Perhaps it will be interesting for us to attend."

Hakan Kuorak, vice-president of the Sami FA, has talked of trying for a minimum eight teams and has hopes of also staging a women's competition.

However, drumming up as many as eight participants may be a struggle. The NF Board will, once again, be unlikely to offer to pay travel expenses, while two potential contenders, Gibraltar and Kosovo, could opt to give the tournament a miss since both have designs on FIFA membership and a VWC appearance may blot their copybook with the world body.

Another tournament could also affect attendance. EUROmin 2008 is to be staged in Switzerland in early June by the Federal Union of European Nationalities, a representative body for minorities across the continent. Although the events do not coincide, potential entrants may well not be able to afford to attend both, since the FUEN is unlikely to offer to cover travel expenses either. Occitania has already expressed an interest in EUROmin 2008.

Steve Menary

Discuss this at worldsoccer.com/forums

RESULTS DECEMBER 2007

INTERNATIONALS

WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

ASIA

1st stage, 1st legs

Oct 21 - Manama
Bahrain 4 (Fatadi 3, Okwunwanne 15, Abdul Rahman 55, A Hubail pen 90)
Malaysia 1 (Umar 45)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 4,000. **Ref:** Yang (Chn)

Oct 21 - Foshan
China 7 (Qu Bo 17, 79, Du Zhenyu 25, Yang Lin 55, Liu Jian 62, Li Jinyu 74, Li Weifeng 77)
Myanmar 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 21,000. **Ref:** Ebrahim (Bhr)

Oct 21 - Gianyar
East Timor 2 (Neves 41, 69)
Hong Kong 3 (Cheng Siu-wai 25, 50, Esteves og 35)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 1,500. **Ref:** Shaharul (Mly)

Oct 21 - Ulaan Bator
Mongolia 1 (Selenge 90)
North Korea 4 (Pak Chol-min 14, Jong Chol-min 24, 32, 78)
HT: 0-3. **Att:** 4,870. **Ref:** Takayama (Jap)

Oct 21 - Colombo
Sri Lanka 0
Qatar 1 (Quintana 69)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 6,500. **Ref:** Bashir (Sin)

Oct 22 - Lahore
Pakistan 0
Iraq 7 (Nashat 17, Mahdi 23, 49, 88, 89, Al-Hamd 70, Emad 83)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 2,500. **Ref:** Chynybekov (Kyr)

Bhutan v Kuwait -
Bhutan withdrew; Kuwait given bye
Guam v Indonesia -
Guam withdrew; Indonesia given bye

1st stage, 2nd legs

Oct 26 - Dushanbe, Tajikistan
Afghanistan 1 (Karimi 15)
Syria 2 (Jenyat 16, Ismail 63)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 2,000. **Ref:** Irmatov (Uzb)
Syria 5-1 on agg

Oct 28 - Hong Kong
Hong Kong 8 (Kwan Yee-lo 2, Siu Ki-chan 5, 78, 85, Sai Ho-cheung 49, Siu Wai-cheng 67, 70, Ka Wai-lam 83)
East Timor 1 (Neves 53)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 1,542. **Ref:** Torky (Irn)
Hong Kong 11-3 on agg

Oct 28 - Aleppo, Syria
Iraq 0
Pakistan 0
Att: 8,000. **Ref:** Al-Fadhli (Kuw)
Iraq 7-0 on agg

Oct 28 - Amman
Jordan 2 (Shelbaieh 33, Aqel pen 50)
Kyrgyzstan 0
Aet. **HT:** 1-0. **90mins:** 2-0. **Att:** 12,000.
Ref: Ebrahim (Bhr)
Sent off: Berezovsky (Kyrgyzstan) 120min
Agg 2-2. Jordan 6-5 on pens

Oct 28 - Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia 0
Bahrain 0
Att: 2,000. **Ref:** Lee (SKo)
Sent off: Abd Razak (Malaysia) 12min; Abdulrahman (Bahrain) 12min
Bahrain 4-1 on agg

Oct 28 - Male
Maldives 2 (Shamweel 14, Ashfaq 67)
Yemen 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 8,900. **Ref:** Sarkar (Ind)
Yemen 3-2 on agg

Oct 28 - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Myanmar 0
China 4 (Wu Weian 13, Liu Jian 14, Zheng Bin 35, Zhang Yaokun pen 39)
HT: 0-4. **Att:** 200. **Ref:** Balideh (Qat)
China 11-0 on agg

Oct 28 - Kathmandu
Nepal 0
Oman 2 (Mohamed 29, Al-Hinai 54)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Tongkhan (Tha)
Oman 4-0 on agg

Oct 28 - Pyongyang
North Korea 5 (Pak Chol-min 3, 74, Kim Kuk-jin 10, Jong Chol-min 36, Jon Kwang-ik 90)
Mongolia 1 (Donorov 41)
HT: 3-1. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Gosh (Ban)
Sent off: Ri Chol-myong (North Korea) 58min
North Korea 9-2 on agg

Oct 28 - Doha
Qatar 5 (Quintana 4, 76, Bashir 17, 55, Al-Shammari 85)
Sri Lanka 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Al-Ghamdi (Sau)
Sent off: Raheem (Sri Lanka) 57min
Qatar 6-0 on agg

Oct 28 - Taipei
Taiwan 0
Uzbekistan 2 (Innomov 79, Suyunov 89)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 800. **Ref:** Shamsuzzaman (Ban)
Uzbekistan 11-0 on agg

Oct 28 - Dushanbe
Tajikistan 5 (Hakimov 46, 47, pen 75, Muhiddinov 50, Vasiev 70)
Bangladesh 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Chynybekov (Kyr)
Tajikistan 6-1 on agg

Oct 28 - Ashgabat
Turkmenistan 4 (Nasyrov 41, Gevorkyan 50, 66, Karadanov 74)
Cambodia 1 (Nasa 12)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Saidov (Uzb)
Turkmenistan 5-1 on agg

Oct 28 - Abu Dhabi
United Arab Emirates 5 (Matar 13, A M Mubarak 40, Al-Shehhi 53, N Mubarak 90, Al-Kas pen 90)
Vietnam 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 12,000. **Ref:** Mohd Salleh (Mly)
Sent off: Huy Hoang Nguyen (Vietnam) 90min
United Arab Emirates 6-0 on agg

Oct 30 - Goa
India 2 (Chetri 29, Dias 90)
Lebanon 2 (Ghaddar pen 76, 88)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Mujghef (Jor)
Sent off: Subrata (India) 72min
Lebanon 6-3 on agg

Singapore v Palestine
Palestine failed to show for 2nd leg;
Singapore were awarded a 3-0 win
Singapore 7-0 on agg

The eight lowest-ranked winners entered 2nd stage. The rest of the winners go straight into the 3rd stage

2nd stage, 1st legs

Nov 9 - Jakarta
Indonesia 1 (Budi pen 39)
Syria 4 (Ismail 17, Al-Zeno 33, Shaabo 43, Rafe 88)
HT: 1-3

Nov 9 - Singapore
Singapore 2 (Duric 24, 44)
Tajikistan 0
HT: 2-0

Nov 9 - Sana'a
Yemen 1 (Al-Hubaishi 42)
Thailand 1 (Sarayoot 32)
HT: 1-1

Nov 10 - Hong Kong
Hong Kong 0
Turkmenistan 0

See also World Cup Qualifying Guide overleaf

COSAFA CASTLE CUP

Final

Oct 24 - Bloemfontein
South Africa 0
Zambia 0
No aet
South Africa 4-3 on pens

FRIENDLIES

Sunday, November 4

Nov 4 - Riyadh
Saudi Arabia 1 (Al-Jassim 14)
Namibia 0
HT: 1-0

Friday, November 9

Nov 9 - Jeddah
Saudi Arabia 2 (Al-Jassim 28, Al-Qahtani 38)
Estonia 0
HT: 2-0

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP

Finals match schedule

In Ghana, January 20-February 10, 2008

Group A

Jan 20	Ghana v Guinea (Accra)
Jan 21	Namibia v Morocco (Accra)
Jan 24	Guinea v Morocco (Accra)
Jan 24	Ghana v Namibia (Accra)
Jan 28	Ghana v Morocco (Accra)
Jan 28	Guinea v Namibia (Sekondi)

Group B

Jan 21	Nigeria v Ivory Coast (Sekondi)
Jan 21	Mali v Benin (Sekondi)
Jan 25	Ivory Coast v Benin (Sekondi)
Jan 25	Nigeria v Mali (Sekondi)
Jan 29	Nigeria v Benin (Sekondi)
Jan 29	Ivory Coast v Mali (Accra)

Group C

Jan 22	Egypt v Cameroon (Kumasi)
Jan 22	Sudan v Zambia (Kumasi)
Jan 26	Cameroon v Zambia (Kumasi)
Jan 26	Egypt v Sudan (Kumasi)
Jan 30	Egypt v Zambia (Kumasi)
Jan 30	Cameroon v Sudan (Tamale)

Group D

Jan 23	Tunisia v Senegal (Tamale)
Jan 23	South Africa v Angola (Tamale)
Jan 27	Senegal v Angola (Tamale)
Jan 27	Tunisia v South Africa (Tamale)
Jan 31	Tunisia v Angola (Tamale)
Jan 31	Senegal v South Africa (Kumasi)

Quarter-finals

Feb 3	Gp A 1st v Gp B 2nd (QF1) (Accra)
Feb 3	Gp B 1st v Gp A 2nd (QF2) (Sekondi)
Feb 4	Gp C 1st v Gp D 2nd (QF3) (Kumasi)
Feb 4	Gp D 1st v Gp C 2nd (QF4) (Tamale)

Semi-finals

Feb 7	QF1 winners v QF4 winners (Accra)
Feb 7	QF2 winners v QF3 winners (Kumasi)

Third-place play-off

Feb 9	(Kumasi)

Final

Feb 10	(Accra)

CLUB FOOTBALL EUROPE

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A

Oct 24
Besiktas (Tur) 2 (Hyypia og 13, Bobo 82)
Liverpool (Eng) 1 (Gerrard 85)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 32,500. **Ref:** Larsen (Den)
Besiktas: Hakan - Ali, Gokhan, Ibrahim Toraman, Ibrahim Uzulmez, Serdar Kurtulus (Koray 42), Cisse, Tello, Serdar Ozkan, Bobo (Diatta 86), Delgado (Higuain 62).
Liverpool: Reina - Finnan, Carragher, Hyypia (Crouch 83), Riise, Pennant (Benayoun 59), Gerrard, Mascherano (Leiva 76), Babel, Voronin, Kuijt.

Oct 24
Marseille (Fra) 1 (Niang 69)
Porto (Por) 1 (L Gonzalez pen 79)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 46,458. **Ref:** Mejuto Gonzalez (Spa)
Marseille: Mandanda - Bonnart, Zubar, Faty, Givet (Taiwo 68), Niang, Cana, Cheyrou, Zenden (Arrache 55), Valbuena, Cisse (Ayew 88).
Porto: Helton - Bosingwa, Stepanov, Bruno Alves, Fucile, L Gonzalez, Paulo Assuncao, Raul Meireles (Leandro Lima 72), Quaresma, Lopez, M Gonzalez (Helder Postiga 46).

Nov 6
Liverpool 8 (Crouch 19, 89, Benayoun 32, 53, 56, Gerrard 69, Babel 78, 81)
Besiktas 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 41,143. **Ref:** Merk (Ger)
Liverpool: Reina - Arbeloa, Carragher, Hyypia, Fabio Aurelio (Babel 63), Benayoun, Gerrard (Leiva 73), Mascherano, Riise, Voronin (Kewell 72), Crouch.
Besiktas: Hakan - Serdar Kurtulus (Higuain 62), Diatta, Ibrahim Toraman, Ibrahim Uzulmez, Koray, Cisse, Mehmet Sedef (Ricardinho 78), Delgado, Serdar Ozkan (Ali 46), Bobo.

Nov 6
Porto 2 (Sektioui 27, Lopez 78)
Marseille 1 (Niang 47)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 47,000. **Ref:** Stark (Ger)
Porto: Helton - Bosingwa, Stepanov, Bruno Alves, Fucile, Raul Meireles (Bolatti 68), Paulo Assuncao, Cech (Helder Postiga 59), Quaresma, Lopez, Sektioui (M Gonzalez 87).
Marseille: Mandanda - Bonnart, Givet, Rodriguez, Taiwo, M'Bami (Cheyrou 84), Cana, Valbuena, Nasri, Ayew (Arrache 77), Niang (Cisse 63).

GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Porto	4	2	2	0	5	3	8
Marseille	4	2	1	1	5	3	7
Liverpool	4	1	1	2	10	4	4
Besiktas	4	1	0	3	2	12	3

Sep 18	Marseille-Besiktas	2-0
Sep 18	Porto-Liverpool	1-1
Oct 3	Besiktas-Porto	0-1
Oct 3	Liverpool-Marseille	0-1
Oct 24	Besiktas-Liverpool	2-1
Oct 24	Marseille-Porto	1-1
Nov 6	Liverpool-Besiktas	8-0
Nov 6	Porto-Marseille	2-1
Nov 28	Besiktas-Marseille	
Nov 28	Liverpool-Porto	
Dec 11	Marseille-Liverpool	
Dec 11	Porto-Besiktas	

Group B

Oct 24
Chelsea (Eng) 2 (Malouda 4, Drogba 47)
Schalke (Ger) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 40,910. **Ref:** Frojdfeldt (Swe)
Chelsea: Cech - Paulo Ferreira, Ricardo Carvalho, Alex, Bridge, Essien (Mikel 70), Makelele, Lampard, J Cole (Shevchenko 89), Drogba, Malouda (Kalou 84).
Schalke: Neuer - Rafinha, Westermann, Bordon, Rodriguez (Bajramovic 81), Ernst, Jones, Grossmuller (Azaouagh 77), Asamoah (Rakitic 61), Larsen, Lovenkrands.

Oct 24
Rosenborg (Nor) 2 (Kone 53, Riseth 61)
Valencia (Spa) 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 21,119. **Ref:** Thomson (Sco)
Rosenborg: Hirschfeld - Strand (Stoor 86), Kvarme, Riseth, Dorsin, Iversen, Skjelbred, Tettey, Sapara, Traore, Kone (Storflor 80).
Valencia: Canizares - Miguel (Angulo 78), Ivan Helguera, Albiol, Moretti, Joaquin, Marchena (Baraja 67), Albelda, Gavilan (Zigic 67), Morientes, Silva.

Nov 6
Schalke 0
Chelsea 0
Att: 53,951. **Ref:** Busacca (Swi)
Schalke: Neuer - Rafinha, Bordon, Krstajic, Westermann, Jones, Bajramovic, Asamoah, Rakitic, Ozil (Lovenkrands 60), Larsen.
Chelsea: Cech (Cudicini 46) - Belletti (Mikel 64), Alex, Ricardo Carvalho, Bridge, Essien, Makelele, Lampard, J Cole, Drogba, Malouda (Wright-Phillips 78).

Nov 6
Valencia 0
Rosenborg 2 (Iversen 31, 58)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 40,000. **Ref:** Yefet (Isr)
Valencia: Hildebrand - Miguel, Marco Caneira, Ivan Helguera, Moretti (Angulo 63), Joaquin (Zigic 63), Albelda, Manuel Fernandes, Silva, Morientes (Rodriguez 46), Villa.
Rosenborg: Hirschfeld - Stoor, Kvarme, Riseth, Dorsin, Skjelbred (Storflor 80), Sapara (Ya Konan 84), Tettey, Iversen, Traore, Kone.

GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea	4	2	2	0	5	2	8
Rosenborg	4	2	1	1	5	3	7
Schalke	4	1	1	2	2	3	4
Valencia	4	1	0	3	2	6	3

Sep 18 Chelsea-Rosenborg 1-1
Sep 18 Schalke-Valencia 0-1
Oct 3 Rosenborg-Schalke 0-2
Oct 3 Valencia-Chelsea 1-2
Oct 24 Chelsea-Schalke 2-0
Oct 24 Rosenborg-Valencia 2-0
Nov 6 Schalke-Chelsea 0-0
Nov 6 Valencia-Rosenborg 0-2
Nov 28 Rosenborg-Chelsea
Nov 28 Valencia-Schalke
Dec 11 Chelsea-Valencia
Dec 11 Schalke-Rosenborg

Group C

Oct 24
Real Madrid (Spa) 4 (Raul 2, Robinho 68, 83, Balboa 90)
Olympiakos (Gre) 2 (Galletti 7, Julio Cesar 47)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 77,400. **Ref:** Ovrebo (Nor)
Real Madrid: Casillas - Michel Salgado (Higuain 64), Sergio Ramos, Metzelder, Marcelo, Robinho, Guti, Gago, Sneijder (Balboa 82), Van Nistelrooy, Raul (Torres 88).
Olympiakos: Nikopolidis - Torosidis, Antzas, Julio Cesar, Raul Bravo (Zewlakow 75), Galletti, Patsatzoglou, Stoltidis, Ledesma (Nunez 86), Djordjevic, Lua Lua (Kovacevic 72).
Sent off: Torosidis 13min.

Oct 24
Werder Bremen (Ger) 2 (Sanogo 28, Hugo Almeida 54)
Lazio (Ita) 1 (Manfredini 82)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 36,587. **Ref:** Benquerenca (Por)
Werder: Wiese - Fritz, Mertesacker, Naldo, Pasanen (Tosic 46), Jensen, Frings, Borowski (Andreasen 73), Diego, Sanogo (Rosenberg 64), Hugo Almeida.
Lazio: Ballotta - Behrami, Stendardo, Zauri, Kolarov, Mudingayi, Meghni (Del Nero 51), Mutarelli, Manfredini, Rocchi (Tare 82), Pandev (Makinwa 69).

Nov 6
Lazio 2 (Rocchi 57, 68)
Werder Bremen 1 (Diego pen 88)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 35,045. **Ref:** Bebek (Cro)
Lazio: Ballotta - Behrami, Stendardo, Cribari, Zauri (De Silvestri 18), Mudingayi, Ledesma, Mutarelli, Meghni (Manfredini 74), Rocchi, Makinwa (Scaloni 87). *Sent off: Cribari 86min.*
Werder: Wiese - Fritz (Harnik 76), Mertesacker, Naldo, Pasanen, Andreasen, Baumann (Jensen 31), Borowski, Diego, Rosenberg, Hugo Almeida.
Sent off: Diego 90min.

Nov 6
Olympiakos 0
Real Madrid 0
Att: 33,000. **Ref:** Michel (Slk)
Olympiakos: Nikopolidis - Pantos, Zewlakow, Julio Cesar (Mendrinos 74), Raul Bravo (Archubi 53), Galletti, Patsatzoglou, Djordjevic, Stoltidis, Lua Lua, Kovacevic (Constantinou 80).
Real Madrid: Casillas - Sergio Ramos, Cannavaro, Heinze, Marcelo, Robinho (Saviola 82), Diarra, Gago, Sneijder, Van Nistelrooy, Raul (Balboa 82).

GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Madrid	4	2	2	0	8	5	8
Lazio	4	1	2	1	6	6	5
Olympiakos	4	1	2	1	6	6	5
Werder	4	1	0	3	5	8	3

Sep 18 Olympiakos-Lazio 1-1
Sep 18 Real Madrid-Werder Bremen ... 2-1
Oct 3 Lazio-Real Madrid 2-2
Oct 3 Werder Bremen-Olympiakos 1-3
Oct 24 Real Madrid-Olympiakos 4-2
Oct 24 Werder Bremen-Lazio 2-1
Nov 6 Lazio-Werder Bremen 2-1
Nov 6 Olympiakos-Real Madrid 0-0
Nov 28 Lazio-Olympiakos
Nov 28 Werder Bremen-Real Madrid
Dec 11 Olympiakos-Werder Bremen
Dec 11 Real Madrid-Lazio

Group D

Oct 24
Benfica (Por) 1 (Cardozo 87)
Celtic (Sco) 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Busacca (Swi)
Benfica: Quim - Maxi Pereira, Luisao, Katsouranis, Leo, Nuno Assis (Di Maria 62), Binya, Rui Costa, Rodriguez (Luis Filipe 84), Bergessio (Adu 62), Cardozo.
Celtic: Boruc - Caldwell, Kennedy, McManus, Naylor, Hartley, Jarosik, S Brown, Donati (Sno 63), McGeady, Killen (McDonald 74).

Oct 24
Milan (Ita) 4 (Gilardino 6, 14, Seedorf 62, 69)
Shakhtar Donetsk (Ukr) 1 (Lucarelli 51)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 36,850. **Ref:** Medina Cantalejo (Spa)
Milan: Kalac - Oddo, Kaladze, Nesta, Favalli (Bonera 61), Gattuso, Pirlo, Ambrosini (Emerson 83), Kaka, Seedorf, Gilardino (Serginho 75).
Shakhtar: Pyatov - Srna, Kucher (Hubschman 17), Chygrynskyi, Rat, Ilsinho, Lewandowski, Fernandinho, Jadson (Castillo 63), Brandao (Gladkyy 75), Lucarelli.

Nov 6
Celtic 1 (McGeady 45)
Benfica 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 52,000. **Ref:** Hansson (Swe)
Celtic: Boruc - Caldwell, Kennedy, McManus, Naylor, Hartley, McGeady, S Brown (Sno 89), Jarosik (Donati 66), Vennegoor of Hesselink (Killen 66), McDonald.
Benfica: Quim - Luis Filipe, Luisao, Edcarlos, Leo, Katsouranis, Binya, Maxi Pereira (Di Maria 61), Rui Costa (Bergessio 77), Rodriguez, Cardozo (Nuno Gomes 77). *Sent off: Binya 85min.*

Nov 6
Shakhtar Donetsk 0
Milan 3 (Inzaghi 66, 90, Kaka 72)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Vink (Hol)
Shakhtar: Pyatov - Srna, Chygrynskyi, Yezerskyi, Rat (Willian 73), Ilsinho, Hubschman, Fernandinho, Jadson, Lucarelli (Castillo 77), Brandao (Gladkyy 84).
Milan: Dida - Bonera, Nesta, Kaladze, Serginho (Brocchi 85), Gattuso, Pirlo, Ambrosini, Seedorf (Maldini 79), Kaka, Gilardino (Inzaghi 63).

GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Milan	4	3	0	1	10	4	9
Shakhtar	4	2	0	2	4	7	6
Celtic	4	2	0	2	3	4	6
Benfica	4	1	0	3	2	4	3

Sep 18 Milan-Benfica 2-1
Sep 18 Shakhtar Donetsk-Celtic 2-0
Oct 3 Benfica-Shakhtar Donetsk 0-1
Oct 3 Celtic-Milan 2-1
Oct 24 Benfica-Celtic 1-0
Oct 24 Milan-Shakhtar Donetsk 4-1
Nov 6 Celtic-Benfica 1-0
Nov 6 Shakhtar Donetsk-Milan 0-3
Nov 28 Benfica-Milan
Nov 28 Celtic-Shakhtar Donetsk
Dec 4 Milan-Celtic
Dec 4 Shakhtar Donetsk-Benfica

Group E

Oct 23
Rangers (Sco) 0
Barcelona (Spa) 0
Att: 49,957. **Ref:** Plautz (Aut)
Rangers: McGregor - Hutton, Cuellar, Weir, Papac, Novo (Beasley 72), Adam, Ferguson, Thomson, McCulloch, Cousin.
Barcelona: Valdes - Thuram, Milito, Puyol, Abidal, Xavi, Iniesta, Gudjohnsen, Messi, Henry (Giovani 82), Ronaldinho.

Oct 23
Stuttgart (Ger) 0
Lyon (Fra) 2 (Fabio Santos 56, Benzema 79)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 51,000. **Ref:** Cortez Batista (Por)
Stuttgart: Schafer - Hilbert, Tasci, Fernando Meira, Osorio, Meissner (Khedira 62), Pardo, Farnerud, Basturk (Ewerthon 71), Cacau, Gomez.
Lyon: Vercoutre - Reveillere, Squillaci, Anderson, Grosso, Juninho, Fabio Santos, Kallstrom, Govou (Clerc 85), Benzema (Bodmer 84), Ben Arfa (Keita 74).

Nov 7
Barcelona 2 (Henry 6, Messi 43)
Rangers 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 86,476. **Ref:** Braamhaar (Hol)
Barcelona: Valdes - Puyol (Oleguer 85), Thuram, Milito, Abidal, Xavi, Toure, Iniesta (Gudjohnsen 71), Messi, Henry, Ronaldinho (Bojan 77).
Rangers: McGregor - Hutton, Cuellar, Weir, Papac, Hemdani, Beasley (Novo 69), Ferguson, Adam (Darcheville 62), McCulloch, Cousin (Naismith 78).

Nov 7
Lyon 4 (Ben Arfa 6, 37, Kallstrom 15, Juninho 90)
Stuttgart 2 (Gomez 16, 56)
HT: 3-1. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Baskakov (Rus)
Lyon: Vercoutre - Reveillere, Squillaci, Anderson, Grosso, Juninho, Fabio Santos, Kallstrom, Govou (Clerc 90), Benzema (Belhadj 82), Ben Arfa (Keita 70).
Stuttgart: Schafer - Beck (Osorio 77), Tasci, Delpierre, Magnin (Farnerud 81), Khedira, Fernando Meira, Basturk, Hitzlsperger, Gomez, Cacau (Marica 58).

GROUP E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona	4	3	1	0	7	0	10
Rangers	4	2	1	1	5	3	7
Lyon	4	2	0	2	6	8	6
Stuttgart	4	0	0	4	3	10	0

Sep 19 Barcelona-Lyon 3-0
Sep 19 Rangers-Stuttgart 2-1
Oct 2 Lyon-Rangers 0-3
Oct 2 Stuttgart-Barcelona 0-2
Oct 23 Rangers-Barcelona 0-0
Oct 23 Stuttgart-Lyon 0-2
Nov 7 Barcelona-Rangers 2-0
Nov 7 Lyon-Stuttgart 4-2
Nov 27 Lyon-Barcelona
Nov 27 Stuttgart-Rangers
Dec 12 Barcelona-Stuttgart
Dec 12 Rangers-Lyon

Group F

Oct 23
Dynamo Kyiv (Ukr) 2 (Diogo Rincon 34, Bangoura 78)
Manchester United (Eng) 4 (Ferdinand 10, Rooney 18, Cristiano Ronaldo 41, pen 68)
HT: 1-3. **Att:** 43,000. **Ref:** Kassai (Hun)
Dynamo: Shovkovskyi - Ghioane (Milevskyi 46), Gavrancic, Diakhate, Nesmachnyi, Yussuf, Husiev, Correa (Rotan 83), Diogo Rincon, Bangoura, Shatskikh (Bialkevich 46).
Man Utd: Van der Sar (Kuszczak 80) - Brown, Ferdinand, Vidic, Fletcher, Cristiano Ronaldo, Anderson, O'Shea, Giggs (Simpson 80), Rooney, Tevez (Nani 73).

Oct 23
Roma (Ita) 2 (Juan 15, Vucinic 70)
Sporting Lisbon (Por) 1 (Liedson 18)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Hauge (Nor)
Roma: Doni - Panucci, Mexes, Juan, Tonetto, Cassetti, De Rossi, Giuly (Brighi 73), Pizarro, Mancini (Cicinho 87), Totti (Vucinic 35).
Sporting: Tiago - Abel, Tonel, Miguel Veloso, Ronny (Purovic 77), Izmailov (Celsinho 81), Joao Moutinho, Romagnoli, Vukcevic (Paredes 71), Liedson, Yannick.

Nov 7
Manchester United 4 (Pique 31, Tevez 37, Rooney 76, Cristiano Ronaldo 88)
Dynamo Kyiv 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 75,017. **Ref:** Wegereef (Hol)
Man Utd: Van der Sar (Kuszczak 46) - Simpson, Vidic, Pique (Evans 73), Evra, Cristiano Ronaldo, Carrick, Fletcher, Nani, Rooney, Tevez (Saha 68).
Dynamo: Shovkovskyi - Markovic, Diakhate, Fedorov, El Kaddouri, Vaschuk, Husiev (Diogo Rincon 46), Ghioane, Correa, Milevskyi (Bangoura 76), Rotan (Rebrov 46).

Nov 7
Sporting Lisbon 2 (Liedson 22, 64)
Roma 2 (Cassetti 4, Anderson Polga og 90)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 32,273. **Ref:** De Bleeckere (Blg)
Sporting: Tiago - Abel, Tonel, Anderson Polga, Ronny, Izmailov (Bruno Pereirinha 89), Miguel Veloso, Joao Moutinho, Romagnoli, Yannick (Vukcevic 63), Liedson.
Roma: Doni - Cicinho, Mexes (Ferrari 46), Juan, Cassetti, Giuly (Brighi 90), De Rossi, Perrotta (Esposito 80), Mancini, Pizarro, Vucinic.

GROUP F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man Utd	4	4	0	0	10	2	12
Roma	4	2	1	1	6	4	7
Sporting	4	1	1	2	5	6	4
Dynamo	4	0	0	4	3	12	0

Sep 19 Roma-Dynamo Kyiv 2-0
Sep 19 Sporting Lisbon-Man Utd 0-1
Oct 2 Dynamo Kyiv-Sporting Lisbon .. 1-2
Oct 2 Man Utd-Roma 1-0
Oct 23 Dynamo Kyiv-Man Utd 2-4
Oct 23 Roma-Sporting Lisbon 2-1
Nov 7 Man Utd-Dynamo Kyiv 4-0
Nov 7 Sporting Lisbon-Roma 2-2
Nov 27 Dynamo Kyiv-Roma
Nov 27 Man Utd-Sporting Lisbon
Dec 12 Roma-Man Utd
Dec 12 Sporting Lisbon-Dynamo Kyiv

Group G

Oct 23
CSKA Moscow (Rus) 1 (Jo 32)
Internazionale (Ita) 2 (Crespo 52, Samuel 80)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Riley (Eng)
CSKA: Mandrykin - V Berezutsky, Ignashevich, A Berezutsky (Grigoriev 45), Krasic, Aldonin, Dudu Cearense (Eduardo 42; Janczyk 76), Rahimic, Zhirkov, Jo, Daniel Carvalho.
Inter: Julio Cesar - Zanetti, Cordoba, Samuel, Maxwell, Figo, Vieira (Stankovic 17), Dacourt (Solari 77), Cambiasso, Ibrahimovic, Crespo (Cruz 62).

Oct 23
PSV Eindhoven (Hol) 0
Fenerbahce (Tur) 0
Att: 36,200. **Ref:** Webb (Eng)
PSV: Gomes - Kromkamp, Addo (Zonneveld 58), Marcellis, Salcido, Perez, Simons, Bakkal (Aissati 78), Farfan, Lazovic, Mendez (Koevermans 58).
Fenerbahce: Volkan Demirel - Gokhan, Lugano, Edu, Roberto Carlos, Deniz, Alex (Ali 35), Mehmet Aurelio, Gokcek, Deivid, Semih (Kazim 72).
Sent off: Deivid 64min.

Nov 7
Fenerbahce 2 (Marcellis og 28, Semih 30)
PSV Eindhoven 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 47,000. **Ref:** Hamer (Lux)
Fenerbahce: Volkan Demirel - Gokhan (Onder 88), Yasin, Edu, Roberto Carlos, Deniz, Alex (Ali 71), Mehmet Aurelio, Gokcek, Kazim (Appiah 86), Semih.
PSV: Gomes - Kromkamp (Zonneveld 46), Alcides, Marcellis, Salcido, Mendez, Simons, Van der Leegte (Bakkal 80), Perez (Koevermans 63), Farfan, Lazovic.

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WORLD CUP QUALIFYING GUIDE

The main World Cup qualifying draw will be held on November 25 in Durban, South Africa, but the programme is already under way in four of the six regions. Here's what's happened so far, and how the campaign will progress

AFRICA

6 finals berths (one of which goes automatically to hosts South Africa)

1st stage

The 10 lowest-ranked countries of the 53 entrants were drawn in five two-leg ties. However, the Central African Republic and Sao Tome e Principe, who had been drawn together, both withdrew. FIFA awarded byes to the two highest-ranked countries of the remaining eight – Swaziland and Seychelles – and reordered the draw:

Djibouti v Somalia*
Madagascar v Comoros Islands
6-2
Sierra Leone v Guinea-Bissau
1-0
1st legs - 14/17.10.07; 2nd legs - 17.11.07
**To be decided on a single match, in Djibouti, 16.11.07*

The winners advance to the 2nd stage.

2nd stage

At the main qualifying draw, the 48 countries* will be drawn into 12 four-team round-robin groups, from which the winners and the eight best runners-up will advance to the 3rd stage.
**South Africa will participate despite having a finals berth guaranteed, because the World Cup qualifying campaign doubles as the qualifying campaign for the 2010 African Nations Cup.*

3rd stage

The 20 countries will be drawn into five four-team round-robin groups, the winners of which will qualify for the finals.
**If South Africa reach the 3rd stage and then win their group, the runners-up in that group will take the World Cup finals berth.*

ASIA

4.5 finals berths

1st stage

The 38 lowest-ranked countries of the 43 entrants were drawn in 19 two-leg ties:

Bahrain v Malaysia
4-1, 0-0 (agg 4-1)
Bangladesh v Tajikistan
1-1, 0-5 (agg 1-6)
*Bhutan v Kuwait
Cambodia v Turkmenistan
0-1, 1-4 (agg 1-5)
China v Myanmar
7-0, 4-0 (agg 11-0)
East Timor v Hong Kong
2-3, 1-8 (agg 3-11)
**Guam v Indonesia
Kyrgyzstan v Jordan
2-0, 0-2 (aet) (agg 2-2; Jordan 6-5 on pens)
Lebanon v India
4-1, 2-2 (agg 6-3)
Mongolia v North Korea
1-4, 1-5 (agg 2-9)
Oman v Nepal
2-0, 2-0 (agg 4-0)
Pakistan v Iraq
0-7, 0-0 (agg 0-7)
Palestine v Singapore
0-4, 0-3 (awarded) (agg 0-7)
Sri Lanka v Qatar
0-1, 0-5 (agg 0-6)
Syria v Afghanistan
3-0, 2-1 (agg 5-1)
Thailand v Macao
6-1, 7-1 (agg 13-2)
Uzbekistan v Taiwan
9-0, 2-0 (agg 11-0)
Vietnam v United Arab Emirates
0-1, 0-5 (agg 0-6)
Yemen v Maldives
3-0, 0-2 (agg 3-2)
1st legs - 08-22.10.07; 2nd legs - 15-30.10.07
**Bhutan withdrew; Kuwait were given a bye*
***Guam withdrew; Indonesia were given a bye*

The eight lowest-ranked winners entered the 2nd stage; the other 11 winners go straight into the 3rd stage, to which Asia's top five seeds – Australia, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Japan and Iran – received a bye.

2nd stage

The eight lowest-ranked 1st stage winners were drawn into four two-leg ties:

Hong Kong v Turkmenistan
0-0
Indonesia v Syria
1-4
Singapore v Tajikistan
2-0
Yemen v Thailand
1-1
1st legs - 09/10.11.07; 2nd legs - 18.11.07

The winners advance to the 3rd stage.

3rd stage

At the main qualifying draw, the 20 countries will be drawn into five four-team round-robin groups, from which the winners and runners-up will advance to the 4th stage.

4th stage

The 10 countries will be drawn into two five-team round-robin groups, from which the winners and runners-up will qualify for the finals. The two third-placed countries will meet in a two-leg play-off, the winners of which will meet the Oceania section winners in a two-leg tie for a place in the finals.

CONCACAF

3.5 finals berths

1st stage

At the main qualifying draw, the 22 lowest-ranked countries of the 35 entrants will be drawn in 11 two-leg ties, the winners of which will advance to the 2nd stage. The countries involved in the 1st stage will be: Barbados, Surinam, Bermuda, Antigua & Barbuda, St Kitts & Nevis, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Bahamas, Nicaragua, Grenada, St Lucia, Turks & Caicos Islands, Dutch Antilles, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Cayman Islands, Puerto Rico, Anguilla, Belize, US Virgin Islands, Montserrat and Aruba.

2nd stage

The 13 highest-ranked countries – Mexico, United States, Costa Rica, Honduras, Panama, Trinidad & Tobago, Jamaica, Cuba, Haiti, Guatemala, Canada, Guyana and St Vincent & The Grenadines – will be drawn against the 11 1st stage winners in 12 two-leg ties. The winners will advance to the 3rd stage.

3rd stage

The 12 countries will be drawn into three four-team round-robin groups, from which the winners and runners-up will advance to the 4th stage.

4th stage

The six countries will play in a single round-robin group. The top three will qualify for the finals. The fourth-placed country will meet the fifth-placed South American country in a two-leg tie for a place in the finals.

EUROPE

13 finals berths

At the main qualifying draw, the 53 entrants will be drawn into nine round-robin groups (eight with six countries, one with five), the winners of which will qualify for the finals. The eight best runners-up will be drawn in four two-leg play-off ties, the winners of which will also qualify for the finals.

OCEANIA

0.5 finals berths

1st stage

The nine-lowest ranked countries of the 10 entrants* played a preliminary qualifying competition (*Tuvalu are not members of FIFA and could not enter the World Cup qualifying competition; they participated in the Samoa tournament because it doubled as the South Pacific Games football competition).

Played in Apia, Samoa

Group A

25.08.07 Tahiti-New Caledonia 0-1
25.08.07 Fiji-Tuvalu 16-0
27.08.07 New Caledonia-Tuvalu 1-0
27.08.07 Fiji-Cook Islands 4-0
29.08.07 Tahiti-Tuvalu 1-1
29.08.07 New Caledonia-Cook Islands ... 3-0
01.09.07 Cook Islands-Tuvalu 4-1
01.09.07 Fiji-Tahiti 4-0
03.09.07 Fiji-New Caledonia 1-1
03.09.07 Tahiti-Cook Islands 1-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fiji	4	3	1	0	25	1	10
New Caledonia	4	3	1	0	6	1	10
Tahiti	4	1	1	2	2	6	4
Cook Islands	4	1	0	3	4	9	3
Tuvalu	4	0	1	3	2	22	1

Group B

25.08.07 Solomon Is-Amer. Samoa 12-1
25.08.07 Samoa-Vanuatu 0-4
27.08.07 Solomon Islands-Tonga 4-0
27.08.07 Samoa-American Samoa 7-0
29.08.07 Vanuatu-American Samoa 15-0
29.08.07 Samoa-Tonga 2-1
01.09.07 Tonga-American Samoa 4-0
01.09.07 Solomon Islands-Vanuatu 2-0
03.09.07 Samoa-Solomon Islands 0-3
03.09.07 Vanuatu-Tonga 4-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Solomon Is	4	4	0	0	21	1	12
Vanuatu	4	3	0	1	23	3	9
Samoa	4	2	0	2	9	8	6
Tonga	4	1	0	3	6	10	3
Amer. Samoa	4	0	0	4	1	38	0

Semi-finals

05.09.07 Solomon Is-New Caledonia 2-3
05.09.07 Fiji-Vanuatu 3-0

Third-place play-off

07.09.07 Solomon Is-Vanuatu 0-2

Final

07.09.07 New Caledonia-Fiji 1-0

New Caledonia, Fiji and Vanuatu qualified for the 2nd stage, to which New Zealand, Oceania's highest-ranked country, received a bye.

2nd stage

The four countries are playing in a single round-robin group. Fixtures:

17.10.07 Fiji-New Zealand 0-2
17.11.07 Fiji-New Caledonia
17.11.07 Vanuatu-New Zealand
21.11.07 New Caledonia-Fiji
21.11.07 New Zealand-Vanuatu
tba New Zealand-Fiji
14.06.08 Vanuatu-New Caledonia
21.06.08 New Caledonia-Vanuatu
06.09.08 Fiji-Vanuatu
06.09.08 New Caledonia-New Zealand
10.09.08 New Zealand-New Caledonia
10.09.08 Vanuatu-Fiji

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
New Zealand	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
New Caledonia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vanuatu	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fiji	1	0	0	1	0	2	0

The winners will meet the fifth-best Asian country in a two-leg tie for a place in the finals.

SOUTH AMERICA

4.5 finals berths

The 10 countries are playing in a single round-robin group. Fixtures:

13.10.07 Argentina-Chile 2-0
13.10.07 Ecuador-Venezuela 0-1
13.10.07 Peru-Paraguay 0-0
13.10.07 Uruguay-Bolivia 5-0
14.10.07 Colombia-Brazil 0-0
16.10.07 Venezuela-Argentina 0-2
17.10.07 Bolivia-Colombia 0-0
17.10.07 Brazil-Ecuador 5-0
17.10.07 Chile-Peru 2-0
17.10.07 Paraguay-Uruguay 1-0
17.11.07 Argentina-Bolivia
17.11.07 Colombia-Venezuela
17.11.07 Paraguay-Ecuador
18.11.07 Peru-Brazil
18.11.07 Uruguay-Chile
20.11.07 Colombia-Argentina
20.11.07 Venezuela-Bolivia
21.11.07 Brazil-Uruguay
21.11.07 Chile-Paraguay
21.11.07 Ecuador-Peru
14.06.08 Argentina-Ecuador
14.06.08 Bolivia-Chile
14.06.08 Paraguay-Brazil
14.06.08 Peru-Colombia
14.06.08 Uruguay-Venezuela

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18.06.08	Bolivia-Paraguay
18.06.08	Brazil-Argentina
18.06.08	Ecuador-Colombia
18.06.08	Uruguay-Peru
18.06.08	Venezuela-Chile
06.09.08	Argentina-Paraguay
06.09.08	Chile-Brazil
06.09.08	Colombia-Uruguay
06.09.08	Ecuador-Bolivia
06.09.08	Peru-Venezuela
10.09.08	Brazil-Bolivia
10.09.08	Chile-Colombia
10.09.08	Paraguay-Venezuela
10.09.08	Peru-Argentina
10.09.08	Uruguay-Ecuador
11.10.08	Argentina-Uruguay
11.10.08	Bolivia-Peru
11.10.08	Colombia-Paraguay
11.10.08	Ecuador-Chile
11.10.08	Venezuela-Brazil
15.10.08	Bolivia-Uruguay
15.10.08	Brazil-Colombia
15.10.08	Chile-Argentina
15.10.08	Paraguay-Peru
15.10.08	Venezuela-Ecuador
28.03.09	Argentina-Venezuela
28.03.09	Colombia-Bolivia
28.03.09	Ecuador-Brazil
28.03.09	Peru-Chile
28.03.09	Uruguay-Paraguay
01.04.09	Bolivia-Argentina
01.04.09	Brazil-Peru
01.04.09	Chile-Uruguay
01.04.09	Ecuador-Paraguay
01.04.09	Venezuela-Colombia
06.06.09	Argentina-Colombia
06.06.09	Bolivia-Venezuela
06.06.09	Paraguay-Chile
06.06.09	Peru-Ecuador
06.06.09	Uruguay-Brazil
10.06.09	Brazil-Paraguay
10.06.09	Chile-Bolivia
10.06.09	Colombia-Peru
10.06.09	Ecuador-Argentina
10.06.09	Venezuela-Uruguay
05.09.09	Argentina-Brazil
05.09.09	Chile-Venezuela
05.09.09	Colombia-Ecuador
05.09.09	Paraguay-Bolivia
05.09.09	Peru-Uruguay
09.09.09	Bolivia-Ecuador
09.09.09	Brazil-Chile
09.09.09	Paraguay-Argentina
09.09.09	Uruguay-Colombia
09.09.09	Venezuela-Peru
10.10.09	Argentina-Peru
10.10.09	Bolivia-Brazil
10.10.09	Colombia-Chile
10.10.09	Ecuador-Uruguay
10.10.09	Venezuela-Paraguay
14.10.09	Brazil-Venezuela
14.10.09	Chile-Ecuador
14.10.09	Paraguay-Colombia
14.10.09	Peru-Bolivia
14.10.09	Uruguay-Argentina

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Argentina	2	2	0	0	4	0	6
Brazil	2	1	1	0	5	0	4
Paraguay	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
Uruguay	2	1	0	1	5	1	3
Chile	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Venezuela	2	1	0	1	1	2	3
Colombia	2	0	2	0	0	0	2
Peru	2	0	1	1	0	2	1
Bolivia	2	0	1	1	0	5	1
Ecuador	2	0	0	2	0	6	0

The top four will qualify for the finals. The fifth-placed country will meet the fourth-placed CONCACAF country in a two-leg tie for a place in the finals.

Finals draw: December 4, 2009
Finals to be held in South Africa from June 11 to July 11, 2010

Nov 7
Internazionale 4 (Ibrahimovic 32, 75, Cambiasso 34, 67)
CSKA Moscow 2 (Jo 23, Vagner Love 31)
HT: 2-2. **Att:** 65,000. **Ref:** Allaerts (Blg)
Inter: Julio Cesar - Maicon, Cordoba, Samuel, Chivu, Zanetti, Dacourt, Cambiasso, Maxwell (Solari 66), Ibrahimovic (Suazo 84), Crespo (Cruz 63).
CSKA: Akinfeev - A Berezutsky, Grigoriev, V Berezutsky (Eduardo 69), Krasic, Dudu Cearense (Taranov 83), Rahimic, Zhirkov, Daniel Carvalho, Jo (Aldonin 46), Vagner Love.

GROUP G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Inter	4	3	0	1	8	4	9
Fenerbahce	4	2	2	0	5	2	8
PSV	4	1	1	2	2	5	4
CSKA	4	0	1	3	6	10	1

Sep 19	Fenerbahce-Internazionale	1-0
Sep 19	PSV-CSKA Moscow	2-1
Oct 2	CSKA Moscow-Fenerbahce	2-2
Oct 2	Internazionale-PSV	2-0
Oct 23	CSKA Moscow-Internazionale	1-2
Oct 23	PSV-Fenerbahce	0-0
Nov 7	Fenerbahce-PSV	2-0
Nov 7	Internazionale-CSKA Moscow	4-2
Nov 27	CSKA Moscow-PSV	
Nov 27	Internazionale-Fenerbahce	
Dec 12	Fenerbahce-CSKA Moscow	
Dec 12	PSV-Internazionale	

Group H

Oct 23
Arsenal (Eng) 7 (Fabregas 5, 58, Hubacek og 24, Walcott 41, 55, Hleb 51, Bendtner 89)
Slavia Prague (Cze) 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 59,621. **Ref:** Farina (Ita)
Arsenal: Almunia - Sagna, Toure, Gallas, Clichy, Eboue, Fabregas, Flamini (Gilberto Silva 63), Hleb (Rosicky 63), Adebayor (Bendtner 63), Walcott.
Slavia: Vaniak - Krajcik, Suchy, Hubacek, Pudil, Senkerik, Svec, Tavares (Belaid 63), Kalivoda (Jablonsky 46), Ivana (Volesak 56), Vlcek.

Oct 23
Sevilla (Spa) 2 (Kanoute 5, Luis Fabiano 17)
Steaua Bucharest (Rom) 1 (Petre 63)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 32,000. **Ref:** Rosetti (Ita)
Sevilla: Palop - Daniel Alves, Mosquera, Dragutinovic, Adriano, Jesus Navas, Poulsen, Keita, Capel (Marti 85), Luis Fabiano, Kanoute (Renato 71).
Steaua: Zapata - Marin, Goian, Rada, Emeghara, Surdu (Neaga 46), Petre, Croitoru, Nicolita, Dica (Badea 46), Iacob (Zaharia 71).

Nov 7
Slavia Prague 0
Arsenal 0
Att: 18,000. **Ref:** Layec (Fra)
Slavia: Vorel - Krajcik, Brabec, Hubacek, Drizdal, Suchy, Smicer (Kalivoda 64), Svec, Tavares, Pudil (Jablonsky 90), Senkerik (Ivana 77).
Arsenal: Almunia - Diarra, Song, Gallas, Clichy, Walcott, Gilberto Silva, Denilson, Diaby, Eduardo (Eboue 81), Bendtner (Adebayor 77).

Nov 7
Steaua Bucharest 0
Sevilla 2 (Renato 25, 65)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 26,000. **Ref:** Fandel (Ger)
Steaua: Zapata - Emeghara, Goian, Rada, Nesu, Nicolita, Petre, Lovin, Croitoru (Badea 46), Dica, Iacob (Surdu 61).
Sevilla: Palop - Daniel Alves, Mosquera, Dragutinovic, Renato, Poulsen, Keita, De Mul (Capel 63), Jesus Navas (Hinkel 89), Adriano, Kanoute (Luis Fabiano 69).

GROUP H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	4	3	1	0	11	0	10
Sevilla	4	3	0	1	8	6	9
Slavia	4	1	1	2	4	12	4
Steaua	4	0	0	4	2	7	0

Sep 19	Arsenal-Sevilla	3-0
Sep 19	Slavia Prague-Steaua	2-1
Oct 2	Sevilla-Slavia Prague	4-2
Oct 2	Steaua-Arsenal	0-1
Oct 23	Arsenal-Slavia Prague	7-0
Oct 23	Sevilla-Steaua	2-1
Nov 7	Slavia Prague-Arsenal	0-0
Nov 7	Steaua-Sevilla	0-2
Nov 27	Sevilla-Arsenal	
Nov 27	Steaua-Slavia Prague	
Dec 12	Arsenal-Steaua	
Dec 12	Slavia Prague-Sevilla	

Top two in each group qualify for 1st knockout round; third-placed sides enter UEFA Cup at the last-32 stage

UEFA CUP

Group A

Oct 25: Everton (Eng) 3 Larisa (Gre) 1; Zenit St Petersburg (Rus) 1 AZ Alkmaar (Hol) 1.
Nov 8: Larisa 2 Zenit St Petersburg 3; Nurnberg (Ger) 0 Everton 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Everton	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
Zenit	2	1	1	0	4	3	4
AZ	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Nurnberg	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Larisa	2	0	0	2	3	6	0

Group B

Oct 25: Lokomotiv Moscow (Rus) 3 Atletico Madrid (Spa) 3; Panathinaikos (Gre) 3 Aberdeen (Sco) 0.
Nov 8: Aberdeen 1 Lokomotiv Moscow 1; FC Copenhagen (Den) 0 Panathinaikos 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Panathinaikos	2	2	0	0	4	0	6
Lokomotiv	2	0	2	0	4	4	2
Atletico	1	0	1	0	3	3	1
Aberdeen	2	0	1	1	1	4	1
Copenhagen	1	0	0	1	0	1	0

Group C

Oct 25: Elfsborg (Swe) 1 AEK Athens (Gre) 1; Villarreal (Spa) 1 Fiorentina (Ita) 1.
Nov 8: Fiorentina 6 Elfsborg 1; Mlada Boleslav (Cze) 1 Villarreal 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fiorentina	2	1	1	0	7	2	4
Villarreal	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
AEK	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Elfsborg	2	0	1	1	2	7	1
M Boleslav	1	0	0	1	1	2	0

Group D

Oct 25: Basle (Swi) 1 Rennes (Fra) 0; Brann (Nor) 0 Hamburg (Ger) 1.
Nov 8: Dinamo Zagreb (Cro) 0 Basle 0; Rennes 1 Brann 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Basle	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
Hamburg	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Dinamo Z	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Brann	2	0	1	1	1	2	1
Rennes	2	0	1	1	1	2	1

Group E

Oct 25: Bayer Leverkusen (Ger) 1 Toulouse (Fra) 0; Sparta Prague (Cze) 1 Zurich (Swi) 2.
Nov 8: Spartak Moscow (Rus) 2 Bayer Leverkusen 1; Toulouse 2 Sparta Prague 3.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zurich	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Spartak M	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Sparta P	2	1	0	1	4	4	3
B Leverkusen	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Toulouse	2	0	0	2	2	4	0

Group F

Oct 25: Bolton (Eng) 1 Sporting Braga (Por) 1; Red Star Belgrade (Ser) 2 Bayern Munich (Ger) 3.
Nov 8: Aris Salonika (Gre) 3 Red Star Belgrade 0; Bayern Munich 2 Bolton 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern	2	1	1	0	5	4	4
Aris	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
Bolton	2	0	2	0	3	3	2
Braga	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Red Star	2	0	0	2	2	6	0

Group G

Oct 25: Anderlecht (Blg) 2 Hapoel Tel Aviv (Isr) 0; Tottenham (Eng) 1 Getafe (Spa) 2.
Nov 8: AaB Aalborg (Den) 1 Anderlecht 1; Hapoel Tel Aviv 0 Tottenham 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Anderlecht	2	1	1	0	3	1	4
Tottenham	2	1	0	1	3	2	3
Getafe	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
AaB	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Hapoel TA	2	0	0	2	0	4	0

Group H

Oct 25: Bordeaux (Fra) 2 Galatasaray (Tur) 1; Helsingborgs (Swe) 1 Panionios (Gre) 1.
Nov 8: Austria Wien (Aut) 1 Bordeaux 2; Galatasaray 2 Helsingborgs 3.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bordeaux	2	2	0	0	4	2	6
Helsingborgs	2	1	1	0	4	3	4
Panionios	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Austria Wien	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Galatasaray	2	0	0	2	3	5	0

Teams play each other once. Top three in each group qualify for 1st knockout round, where they will be joined by the eight third-placed sides from the Champions League group stage

AUSTRIA

Oct 20: Ried 3 LASK Linz 0; Altach 0 Mattersburg 0; Austria Karnten 2 Wacker Innsbruck 0; Salzburg 4 Sturm Graz 1.
Oct 21: Austria Wien 2 Rapid Wien 2.
Oct 24: Wacker Innsbruck 0 Altach 1.
Oct 26: Rapid Wien 4 LASK Linz 4.
Oct 27: Ried 2 Salzburg 0; Mattersburg 5 Austria Karnten 2; Altach 0 Sturm Graz 0.
Oct 28: Wacker Innsbruck 2 Austria Wien 0.
Oct 30: Salzburg 2 Rapid Wien 1.
Oct 31: Austria Wien 2 Mattersburg 2; LASK Linz 5 Wacker Innsbruck 0; Sturm Graz 5 Ried 0; Austria Karnten 1 Altach 1.
Nov 3: Rapid Wien 4 Ried 0; Wacker Innsbruck 3 Salzburg 1; Altach 1 Austria Wien 0; Austria Karnten 0 Sturm Graz 0.
Nov 4: Mattersburg 0 LASK Linz 0.
Nov 9: LASK Linz 1 Salzburg 1.
Nov 10: Ried 0 Sturm Graz 0; Altach 1 Wacker Innsbruck 1; Rapid Wien 3 Mattersburg 1.
Nov 11: Austria Karnten 0 Austria Wien 1.

AUSTRIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Austria Wien	19	9	7	3	26	17	34
LASK Linz	19	8	7	4	33	25	31
Rapid Wien	19	9	4	6	33	25	31
Mattersburg	19	7	8	4	34	23	29
Salzburg	19	8	5	6	29	23	29
Sturm Graz	19	6	9	4	32	21	27
Ried	19	8	2	9	26	31	26
Altach	19	5	6	8	20	28	21
A Karnten	19	4	4	11	17	36	16
Wacker	19	2	6	11	16	37	12

BELGIUM

Saturday, October 20

Club Brugge 2 (Sonck 58, Leko 70)
Dender 0 Att: 26,071

Germinal Beerschot 3 (Malki 22, 82, Verhoeven 87)
FC Brussels 0 Att: 9,253

Lokeren 1 (Mbaye 87)
Charleroi 0 Att: 4,772

Mechelen 0
Cercle Brugge 4 (De Sutter 24, 51, Iachtchouk 47, Portier 87) Att: 10,500

Mouscron 1 (Custovic pen 69)
Genk 1 (Vrancken 45) Att: 7,504

St Truiden 2 (Milenkovic 37, Hendrikx 83)
Zulte Waregem 1 (Matthijs 5) Att: 7,000

Westerlo 6 (Farssi 2, 51, Van Hout 10, Coelho 70, 89, Van den Eede 86)
Roeselare 0 Att: 4,500

Sunday, October 21
Anderlecht 2 (Legear 15, Frutos 44)
Gent 1 (Ruiz 46) Att: 25,943

Mons 1 (Zoko 90)
Standard 1 (De Camargo 48) Att: 4,500

Friday, October 26
Gent 2 (Azofeifa 15, Foley 34)
Mons 0 Att: 9,397

Saturday, October 27
FC Brussels 1 (Fort 39)
Charleroi 2 (Camus 33, Akpala 46) Att: 4,000

Dender 0
Mouscron 3 (Tomou Bayard 3, 52, 85) Att: 3,445

Roeselare 2 (Kpaka 17, Akgul 90)
St Truiden 0 Att: 7,000

Standard 2 (Defour 30, Mbokani 49)
Mechelen 2 (Persoons 4, 50) Att: 29,173

Westerlo 1 (King og 44)
Germinal Beerschot 2 (Ederson 60, Losada pen 89) Att: 7,000

Zulte Waregem 1 (Leye 43)
Lokeren 1 (El Mouataz pen 57) Att: 7,000

Sunday, October 28
Cercle Brugge 0
Anderlecht 0 Att: 19,555

Genk 1 (Barda 49)
Club Brugge 2 (Leko pen 39, Djokic 56) Att: 24,767

Friday, November 2
Mouscron 0
Standard 0 Att: 10,057

Saturday, November 3
Anderlecht 3 (Goor 21, Serhat 58, 88)
Westerlo 1 (Wils 40) Att: 24,997

Charleroi 1 (Orlando 63)
Dender 0 Att: 8,171

Club Brugge 1 (Djokic 34)
Zulte Waregem 0 Att: 27,694

Germinal Beerschot 2 (M Monteyne 26, Cavens 86)
Roeselare 0 Att: 9,000

Mons 0
Cercle Brugge 2 (Gombami 3, Snelders 90) Att: 4,000

St Truiden 2 (Chimedza pen 65, pen 90)
Gent 1 (Foley 63) Att: 6,000

Sunday, November 4
Lokeren 1 (Carevic 2)
Genk 1 (Barda 83) Att: 5,000

Mechelen 4 (Ivens pen 35, Geudens 38, Nong 67, 74)
FC Brussels 0 Att: 11,000

Friday, November 9
Cercle Brugge 1 (De Sutter 46)
Club Brugge 2 (Blondel 41, Sterchele 54) Att: 27,012

Saturday, November 10
FC Brussels 4 (Oumouri og 44, Haydock 46, Gorius 70, Bruno 86)
Dender 1 (Munyaneza 77) Att: 4,000

Genk 1 (Dahmane 38)
Charleroi 0 Att: 23,423

Standard 1 (De Camargo 25)
Lokeren 0 Att: 25,000

Westerlo 2 (Van den Eede 57, Delen 83)
St Truiden 0 Att: 5,000

Zulte Waregem 2 (Sankare 17, Van Nieuwenhuyze 19)
Mouscron 1 (Tomou Bayard 67) Att: 6,000

Sunday, November 11
Gent 4 (Olufade 33, pen 60, Ruiz 35, Foley 45)
Mechelen 1 (Nong 17) Att: 11,747
Germinal Beerschot 2 (Malki 19, Losada 82)
Anderlecht 0 Att: 12,000

Monday, November 12
Roeselare 4 (Tanghe 20, Joseph-Augustin 34, Dissa 78, Akgul 82)
Mons 3 (Zoko 16, Smits og 60, Cordaro 73)

BELGIUM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Club Brugge	13	9	3	1	21	11	30
Standard	13	8	5	0	28	10	29
Cercle Brugge	13	7	3	3	27	13	24
Anderlecht	13	6	5	2	19	13	23
Genk	13	6	5	2	16	15	23
Mouscron	13	6	3	4	21	14	21
Germinal B	13	6	3	4	18	13	21
Gent	13	5	5	3	26	16	20
Charleroi	13	6	2	5	14	12	20
Lokeren	13	5	4	4	11	10	19
Zulte Waregem	13	5	3	5	17	19	18
Roeselare	13	4	5	4	16	24	17
Westerlo	13	4	3	6	15	13	15
FC Brussels	13	3	1	9	11	25	10
Mons	13	2	3	8	15	23	9
Mechelen	13	1	5	7	15	25	8
St Truiden	13	2	1	10	10	26	7
Dender	13	1	3	9	8	26	6

LEADING GOALSCORERS
8 Bertin Tomou Bayard (Mouscron)
7 Joseph Akpala (Charleroi)
7 Milan Jovanovic (Standard)

BULGARIA

Oct 20: Slavia 1 Lovech 0; Lokomotiv Plovdiv 0 CSKA 1; Beroe 2 Vihren 0; Vidima-Rakovski 1 Levski 3; Pirin 0 Spartak Varna 2; Marek 1 Botev 0; Lokomotiv Sofia 1 Belasitsa 0; Cherno More 2 Chernomorets Burgas 1.
Oct 26: Chernomorets Burgas 1 Marek 0; Levski 6 Botev 2.
Oct 27: Belasitsa 1 Slavia 2; Vihren 0 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 2; Vidima-Rakovski 0 Pirin 1; Spartak Varna 0 Lokomotiv Sofia 1; Lovech 1 Beroe 1; CSKA 1 Cherno More 0.
Nov 3: Cherno More 1 Vihren 0; Beroe 2 Belasitsa 1; Pirin 1 Levski 1; Marek 1 CSKA 3; Lokomotiv Sofia 2 Vidima-Rakovski 0; Lokomotiv Plovdiv 1 Lovech 0.
Nov 4: Botev 0 Chernomorets Burgas 0; Slavia 5 Spartak Varna 0.
Nov 10: Vihren 3 Marek 1; Vidima-Rakovski 0 Slavia 2; Spartak Varna 1 Beroe 0.
Nov 11: Lovech 1 Cherno More 1; Belasitsa 0 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 0; Pirin 1 Lokomotiv Sofia 3; CSKA 2 Botev 0.

BULGARIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CSKA	12	11	1	0	21	4	34
Lok Sofia	12	8	3	1	23	11	27
Levski	11	8	2	1	26	10	26
Slavia	12	7	2	3	21	10	23
Pirin	12	6	2	4	15	12	20
Lovech	12	4	5	3	16	11	17
Chernomorets	11	5	2	4	15	14	17
Lok Plovdiv	12	4	3	5	13	11	15
Cherno More	12	3	4	5	9	15	13
Beroe	12	3	3	6	8	11	12
Spartak Varna	12	3	3	6	8	16	12
Vihren	12	3	2	7	10	15	11
Marek	12	3	2	7	9	18	11
Botev	12	2	4	6	15	23	10
Belasitsa	12	2	2	8	6	18	8
V-Rakovski	12	2	2	8	6	22	8

CROATIA

Oct 20: Zagreb 1 Medimurje 1; Varteks 2 Cibalia 1; Hajduk 4 Zadar 1; Slaven 2 Osijek 0; Rijeka 2 Inter 1; Sibenik 0 Dinamo 2.
Oct 27: Medimurje 2 Slaven 0; Zagreb 3 Sibenik 1; Zadar 1 Dinamo 2; Cibalia 2 Rijeka 0; Inter 0 Hajduk 1; Osijek 0 Varteks 1.
Oct 31: Sibenik 0 Zadar 0; Varteks 2 Medimurje 0; Rijeka 1 Osijek 1; Hajduk 2 Cibalia 2; Dinamo 5 Inter 0; Slaven 1 Zagreb 0.
Nov 3: Cibalia 1 Dinamo 2; Medimurje 0 Rijeka 1; Zagreb 0 Varteks 0; Inter 2 Zadar 1; Osijek 0 Hajduk 1; Slaven 1 Sibenik 0.
Nov 10: Zadar 1 Cibalia 1; Sibenik 1 Inter 1; Varteks 1 Slaven 1; Rijeka 2 Zagreb 1; Hajduk 3 Medimurje 3.
Nov 11: Dinamo 1 Osijek 0.

CROATIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo	16	15	0	1	47	12	45
Rijeka	16	10	3	3	28	15	33
Hajduk	16	7	6	3	28	19	27
Slaven	16	8	3	5	25	16	27
Zadar	16	6	4	6	26	25	22
Cibalia	16	5	5	6	20	21	20
Osijek	16	5	3	8	16	21	18
Sibenik	16	3	8	5	20	29	17
Inter	16	5	2	9	14	32	17
Zagreb	16	4	4	8	17	20	16
Varteks	16	4	2	10	18	32	14
Medimurje	16	2	4	10	17	34	10

CZECH REPUBLIC

Oct 19: Slavia 3 Plzen 0.
Oct 20: Olomouc 1 Teplice 0.
Oct 21: Zizkov 2 Zlin 0; Jablonec 1 Ostrava 1; Kladno 2 Bohemians 1; Most 2 Brno 2; Ceske Budejovice 1 Sparta 1.
Oct 22: Mlada Boleslav 0 Liberec 2.
Oct 27: Zlin 0 Jablonec 1.
Oct 28: Bohemians 1 Most 0; Plzen 2 Olomouc 0; Sparta 4 Kladno 1; Brno 2 Ceske Budejovice 1; Teplice 4 Zizkov 1; Ostrava 3 Mlada Boleslav 3.
Oct 29: Liberec 1 Slavia 1.
Nov 3: Slavia 1 Teplice 0.
Nov 4: Zizkov 2 Olomouc 0; Ceske Budejovice 3 Ostrava 0; Kladno 1 Plzen 2; Mlada Boleslav 0 Zlin 1; Most 0 Sparta 5; Brno 2 Bohemians 0.
Nov 5: Jablonec 1 Liberec 2.
Nov 10: Liberec 2 Most 1; Olomouc 1 Jablonec 1; Zlin 4 Kladno 0; Ostrava 2 Brno 1.
Nov 11: Zizkov 1 Slavia 1; Plzen 2 Mlada Boleslav 0; Teplice 4 Ceske Budejovice 2.
Nov 12: Sparta 3 Bohemians 1.

CZECH REPUBLIC

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Slavia	13	9	3	1	24	8	30
Sparta	13	8	2	3	24	10	26
Teplice	13	8	2	3	21	11	26
Ostrava	13	6	5	2	22	14	23
Plzen	13	6	3	4	14	12	21
Brno	13	5	4	4	18	18	19
Zlin	13	5	4	4	13	15	19
Olomouc	13	4	5	4	8	11	17
M Boleslav	13	4	4	5	15	15	16
Liberec	13	4	4	5	12	13	16
C Budejovice	13	4	3	6	17	19	15
Zizkov	13	3	4	6	18	25	13
Kladno	13	3	3	7	18	26	12
Jablonec	13	2	5	6	9	14	11
Bohemians	13	2	4	7	7	17	10
Most	13	1	5	7	17	29	8

DENMARK

Oct 20: AaB 0 FC Copenhagen 0.
Oct 21: Nordsjaelland 2 Randers 1; OB 2 Horsens 0; Lyngby 2 Viborg 0; Brondby 2 AGF 1.
Oct 22: Midtjylland 2 Esbjerg 2.
Oct 27: Lyngby 1 AGF 3.
Oct 28: Midtjylland 2 Viborg 1; FC Copenhagen 0 Randers 1; Nordsjaelland 1 Horsens 2; OB 0 Brondby 0.
Oct 29: AaB 2 Esbjerg 0.
Nov 3: AGF 0 FC Copenhagen 2.
Nov 4: Esbjerg 1 Nordsjaelland 2; Randers 1 AaB 0; Horsens 1 Midtjylland 1; Brondby 3 Lyngby 0.
Nov 5: Viborg 0 OB 2.
Nov 10: Brondby 3 Horsens 0.
Nov 11: OB 0 Randers 0; Nordsjaelland 1 AaB 2; Lyngby 1 Esbjerg 3; Midtjylland 2 FC Copenhagen 2.
Nov 12: Viborg 0 AGF 2.

DENMARK

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Copenhagen	16	8	6	2	20	9	30
AaB	16	9	3	4	30	24	30
Midtjylland	16	8	5	3	26	19	29
OB	16	6	9	1	23	10	27
Horsens	16	7	5	4	23	22	26
Randers	16	7	4	5	23	11	25
Nordsjaelland	16	6	5	5	22	19	23
Brondby	16	5	5	6	20	22	20
Esbjerg	16	5	4	7	31	28	19
AGF	16	4	2	10	15	25	14
Viborg	16	3	1	12	12	35	10
Lyngby	16	2	3	11	13	34	9

ENGLAND

Saturday, October 20
Arsenal 2 (Toure 68, Rosicky 80)
Bolton 0 Att: 59,442

Aston Villa 1 (Agbonlahor 12)
Manchester United 4 (Rooney 36, 44, Ferdinand 45, Giggs 75) Att: 42,640

Blackburn 4 (McCarthy 18, pen 82, Santa Cruz 22, Tugay 32)
Reading 2 (Doyle 80, 90) Att: 19,425

Everton 1 (Hyypia og 38)
Liverpool 2 (Kuijt pen 53, pen 90) Att: 40,049

Fulham 0
Derby 0 Att: 22,576

Manchester City 1 (Elano 37)
Birmingham 0 Att: 45,688

Middlesbrough 0
Chelsea 2 (Drogba 8, Alex 57) Att: 27,699

Wigan 0
Portsmouth 2 (Mwaruwari 81, Johnson 86) Att: 17,695

Sunday, October 21
West Ham 3 (Cole 9, Gordon og 78, Bellamy 90)
Sunderland 1 (Jones 51) Att: 34,913

Monday, October 22
Newcastle 3 (Martins 45, Cacapa 51, Milner 73)
Tottenham 1 (Keane 57) Att: 51,411

Saturday, October 27
Birmingham 3 (Kapo pen 26, 81, Ridgewell 67)
Wigan 2 (Bent 23, 59) Att: 27,661

Chelsea 6 (Essien 16, Drogba 31, 56, J Cole 60, Kalou 75, Shevchenko 90)
Manchester City 0 Att: 41,832

Manchester United 4 (Nani 3, Rooney 33, Tevez 55, 85)
Middlesbrough 1 (Aliadiere 6) Att: 75,720

Portsmouth 0
West Ham 0 Att: 20,525

Reading 2 (Kitson 53, Long 84)
Newcastle 1 (Duberry og 76) Att: 24,119

Sunderland 1 (Jones 86)
Fulham 1 (Davies 32) Att: 39,392

Sunday, October 28
Bolton 1 (Anelka 22)
Aston Villa 1 (Moore 57) Att: 18,413

Derby 0
Everton 2 (Arteta 26, Aiyegbeni 63) Att: 33,048

Liverpool 1 (Gerrard 7)
Arsenal 1 (Fabregas 80) Att: 44,112

Tottenham 1 (Keane pen 49)
Blackburn 2 (McCarthy 60, Samba 90) Att: 36,086

Saturday, November 3
Arsenal 2 (Fabregas 48, Gallas 90)
Manchester United 2 (Gallas og 45, Cristiano Ronaldo 82) Att: 60,161

Aston Villa 2 (Laursen 57, Young 61)
Derby 0 Att: 40,938

Blackburn 0
Liverpool 0 Att: 30,033

Everton 3 (Aiyegbeni 10, Vaughan 90, Carsley 90)
Birmingham 1 (Kapo 79) Att: 35,155

Fulham 3 (Davies 18, Dempsey 72, Healy 90)
Reading 1 (Doyle 54) Att: 22,086

Middlesbrough 1 (Young 52)
Tottenham 1 (Bent 35) Att: 25,625

Newcastle 1 (Campbell og 16)
Portsmouth 4 (Pamarot 8, Mwaruwari 9, Utaka 11, Kranjcar 71) Att: 51,490

Wigan 0
Chelsea 2 (Lampard 11, Belletti 18) Att: 19,011

Sunday, November 4
West Ham 1 (McCartney 19)
Bolton 1 (Nolan 90) Att: 33,867

Monday, November 5
Manchester City 1 (Ireland 67)
Sunderland 0 Att: 40,038

Saturday, November 10
Derby 0
West Ham 5 (Bowyer 42, 59, Etherington 51, Lewis og 54, Solano 69) Att: 32,440

Liverpool 2 (Fernando Torres 81, Gerrard pen 85)
Fulham 0 Att: 43,073

Sunderland 1 (Higginbotham 52)
Newcastle 1 (Milner 65) Att: 47,701

Sunday, November 11
Birmingham 1 (Forssell 62)
Aston Villa 2 (Ridgewell og 10, Agbonlahor 87) Att: 26,539

Bolton 0
Middlesbrough 0 Att: 17,624

Chelsea 1 (Drogba 71)
Everton 1 (Cahill 89) Att: 41,683

Manchester United 2 (Cristiano Ronaldo 34, 35)
Blackburn 0 Att: 75,710

Portsmouth 0
Manchester City 0 Att: 19,529

Tottenham 4 (Jenas 13, 26, Lennon 34, Bent 72)
Wigan 0 Att: 35,504

Monday, November 12
Reading 1 (Shorey 87)
Arsenal 3 (Flamini 44, Adebayor 52, Hleb 78) Att: 24,024

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	12	9	3	0	27	10	30
Man Utd	13	9	3	1	23	6	30
Man City	13	8	2	3	16	13	26
Chelsea	13	7	4	2	19	9	25
Liverpool	12	6	6	0	19	6	24
Portsmouth	13	6	5	2	23	13	23
Blackburn	12	6	4	2	15	11	22
Aston Villa	12	6	3	3	18	14	21
Everton	13	6	2	5	19	15	20
West Ham	12	5	3	4	18	10	18
Newcastle	12	5	3	4	19	18	18
Reading	13	4	1	8	16	29	13
Fulham	13	2	6	5	16	20	12
Tottenham	13	2	5	6	23	24	11
Birmingham	13	3	2	8	13	20	11
Sunderland	13	2	4	7	13	22	10
Middlesbrough	13	2	4	7	12	23	10
Bolton	13	1	5	7	11	18	8
Wigan	13	2	2	9	10	23	8
Derby	13	1	3	9	5	31	6

LEADING GOALSCORERS
8 Benjani Mwaruwari (Portsmouth)
7 Emmanuel Adebayor (Arsenal)
6 Nicolas Anelka (Bolton)
6 Cristiano Ronaldo (Manchester United)
6 Cesc Fabregas (Arsenal)
6 Robbie Keane (Tottenham)

FAROE ISLANDS

FAROE ISLANDS – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
NSI	27	19	4	4	51	24	61
EB/Streymur	27	17	3	7	58	33	54
B36	27	15	7	5	47	23	52
HB	27	15	4	8	59	34	49
GI	27	11	5	11	45	52	38
Skala	27	10	4	13	27	40	34
KI	27	9	6	12	44	47	33
B71	27	9	5	13	39	49	32
AB	27	4	5	18	30	55	17
VB/Sumba	27	2	5	20	27	70	11

Relegated: AB, VB/Sumba
Promoted: B68, IF

FINLAND

FINLAND – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tampere	26	16	6	4	45	27	54
Haka	26	13	7	6	39	23	46
TPS	26	13	4	9	43	33	43
Honka	26	10	11	5	34	25	41
MyPa	26	11	7	8	29	26	40
Mariehamn	26	9	10	7	31	30	37
HJK	26	7	13	6	31	25	34
Lahti	26	9	6	11	38	34	33
Inter	26	9	6	11	32	28	33
VPS	26	7	11	8	26	35	32
Jaro	26	7	7	12	30	41	28
KooTeePee	26	7	5	14	27	38	26
Viikingit	26	5	8	13	25	44	23
Oulu	26	5	7	14	28	49	22

Relegated: Viikingit (after play-off), Oulu
Promoted: KuPS Kuopio, RoPS (after play-off)

FRANCE

Saturday, October 20
Auxerre 5 (Jallet og 55, Jelen 72, 75, 90, Niculae 82)
Lorient 3 (Saifi 5, 58, Bourhani 90) Att: 8,157

Caen 1 (Tafforeau og 59)
Lille 0 Att: 18,275

Lyon 3 (Juninho pen 12, Reveillere 19, Benzema 50)
Monaco 1 (Monsoreau 41) Att: 36,254

Nice 3 (Kone 10, pen 59, Kante 65)
Metz 1 (Barbosa 68) Att: 9,525

Rennes 3 (Pagis 11, Wiltord 53, Esteban 90)
Le Mans 0 Att: 23,349

Strasbourg 1 (Gameiro 15)
Bordeaux 1 (Bellion 62) Att: 18,878

Toulouse 0
Saint-Etienne 2 (Gomis 29, 36) Att: 20,466

Valenciennes 0
Paris Saint-Germain 0 Att: 15,037

Sunday, October 21
Marseille 1 (Zenden 74)
Lens 0 Att: 53,000

Nancy 1 (Kim 26)
Sochaux 1 (Erding 56) Att: 18,689

Saturday, October 27
Bordeaux 2 (Jussie pen 36, Bellion 45)
Valenciennes 1 (Diawara og 34) Att: 18,521

Lille 0
Strasbourg 3 (Mouloungui 36, Rodrigo 41, Johansen 68) Att: 12,147

Lorient 0
Nice 0 Att: 10,868

Metz 0
Nancy 0 Att: 19,585

Monaco 0
Caen 0 Att: 8,986

Saint-Etienne 0
Auxerre 0 Att: 30,448

Sochaux 2 (Zubar og 31, Bonnart og 51)
Marseille 1 (Niang 9) Att: 19,957

Sunday, October 28
Le Mans 1 (Sessegnon 60)
Toulouse 1 (Dieuze 81) Att: 9,841

Lens 1 (Monterrubio 50)
Rennes 2 (Wiltord 57, Leroy 77) Att: 30,441

Paris Saint-Germain 2 (Pauleta 61, 90)
Lyon 3 (Ben Arfa 41, 43, Govou 84) Att: 39,787

Saturday, November 3
Auxerre 0
Lille 1 (Grichting og 76) Att: 8,856

Lyon 2 (Juninho 40, Govou 87)
Valenciennes 0 Att: 38,631

Marseille 0
Lorient 0 Att: 51,864

Nancy 1 (Malonga 29)
Bordeaux 0 Att: 19,686

Nice 0
Sochaux 0 Att: 10,221

Rennes 0
Monaco 1 (Piquionne 46) Att: 27,754

Strasbourg 1 (Renteria 49)
Paris Saint-Germain 2 (Rodrigo og 6, Armand 19) Att: 25,770

Sunday, November 4
Caen 3 (Gouffran 33, 66, Eluchans 58)
Le Mans 2 (Basa 46, De Melo 73) Att: 20,286

Lens 3 (Coulibaly 63, Demont 65, Dindane 85)
Saint-Etienne 2 (Gigliotti 17, Landrin 22) Att: 33,877

Toulouse 0
Metz 0 Att: 16,551

Saturday, November 10
Le Mans 3 (De Melo pen 19, pen 70, N'Dri 43)
Saint-Etienne 2 (Varrault 21, Gigliotti pen 42) Att: 12,434

Lille 1 (Fauvergue 16)
Nice 1 (Plestan og 41) Att: 12,286

Metz 1 (Aguirre 70)
Lens 2 (Monterrubio 57, Khiter 87) Att: 12,268

Monaco 3 (Gakpe 44, Nene 63, 90)
Strasbourg 0 Att: 9,448

Paris Saint-Germain 0
Nancy 0 Att: 36,495

Sochaux 1 (Pitau 90)
Auxerre 1 (Kahlenberg pen 9) Att: 18,442

Valenciennes 3 (Sebo 16, 43, Savidan 61)
Caen 0 Att: 12,449

Sunday, November 11
Bordeaux 3 (Bellion pen 18, 49, Obertan 82)
Rennes 0 Att: 21,759

Lorient 1 (Abriel 50)
Toulouse 0 Att: 9,575

Lyon 1 (Juninho 7)
Marseille 2 (Niang pen 10, 42) Att: 38,811

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lyon	14	10	1	3	30	14	31
Nancy	13	8	4	1	20	7	28
Bordeaux	14	7	4	3	19	12	25
Rennes	14	7	3	4	17	13	24
Le Mans	14	7	2	5	21	20	23
Valenciennes	14	6	3	5	17	16	21
Monaco	14	6	2	6	19	15	20
Nice	14	5	5	4	14	11	20
Strasbourg	14	5	4	5	15	13	19
Saint-Etienne	14	5	3	6	16	15	18
Lorient	14	4	6	4	14	16	18
Lille	14	3	8	3	14	14	17
Paris SG	14	3	7	4	12	15	16
Toulouse	13	4	4	5	12	15	16
Lens	13	4	3	6	11	14	15
Caen	13	4	3	6	11	17	15
Marseille	14	3	5	6	11	16	14
Auxerre	14	4	2	8	12	22	14
Sochaux	14	2	7	5	12	18	13
Metz	14	1	4	9	7	21	7

LEADING GOALSCORERS
11 Karim Benzema (Lyon)
10 David Bellion (Bordeaux)
9 Tulio De Melo (Le Mans)
6 Kim (Nancy)
6 Bakary Kone (Nice)
6 Rafik Saifi (Lorient)

GERMANY

Friday, October 19
Energie Cottbus 1 (Rost 66)
Duisburg 2 (Schlicke 7, Grlic 74) Att: 14,853

Saturday, October 20
Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Gekas 52, Kiessling 86)
Borussia Dortmund 2 (Petric 41, 54) Att: 22,500

Bochum 1 (Grote 11)
Bayern Munich 2 (Ribery 35, Schweinsteiger 78) Att: 31,328

Hamburg 4 (Olic 7, 23, 35, Mathijsen 60)
Stuttgart 1 (Tasci 73) Att: 57,000

Hansa Rostock 1 (Stein 56)
Schalke 1 (Asamoah 33) Att: 29,000

Nurnberg 5 (Haristeas 20, Mintal 50, 64, Misimovic pen 54, Kennedy 82)
Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (Takahara 12) Att: 45,050

Werder Bremen 3 (Hugo Almeida 57, Rosenberg 62, Andreasen 74)
Hertha Berlin 2 (Gilberto 61, Okoronkwo 90) Att: 40,278

Sunday, October 21
Hannover 2 (Pinto 28, Tarnat 34)
Wolfsburg 2 (Marcelinho 21, Dejagah 29) Att: 37,812

Karlsruhe 0
Arminia Bielefeld 0 Att: 27,361

Friday, October 26
Eintracht Frankfurt 0
Hannover 0 Att: 44,700

Saturday, October 27
Arminia Bielefeld 1 (Kamper 77)
Energie Cottbus 1 (Sorensen 90) Att: 17,600

Hansa Rostock 0
Karlsruhe 0 Att: 14,000

Hertha Berlin 2 (Maltritz og 26, Pantelic 35)
Bochum 0 Att: 34,580

Schalke 1 (Grossmuller 14)
Werder Bremen 1 (Naldo 34) Att: 61,482

Stuttgart 1 (Beck 72)
Bayer Leverkusen 0 Att: 51,000

Wolfsburg 3 (Haristeas og 30, Grafite 34, Dejagah 67)
Nurnberg 1 (Misimovic pen 54) Att: 19,798

Sunday, October 28
Borussia Dortmund 0
Bayern Munich 0 Att: 80,708

Duisburg 0
Hamburg 1 (Kompany 37) Att: 30,160

Friday, November 2
Energie Cottbus 1 (Bassila 46)
Schalke 0 Att: 17,012

Saturday, November 3
Bayer Leverkusen 4 (Barbarez 9, 80, Gekas 29, 34)
Arminia Bielefeld 0 Att: 22,500

Bayern Munich 0
Eintracht Frankfurt 0 Att: 69,000

Hamburg 2 (Guerrero 4, Reinhardt 81)
Hertha Berlin 1 (Ebert 59) Att: 56,493

Hannover 2 (Huszti pen 54, Schulz 73)
Borussia Dortmund 1 (Kringe 79) Att: 45,087

Nurnberg 0
Stuttgart 1 (Gomez 25) Att: 45,565

Werder Bremen 1 (Hugo Almeida 39)
Hansa Rostock 0 Att: 41,738

Sunday, November 4
Bochum 5 (Sestak 4, 44, Maltritz pen 20, Fuchs 42, Epalle 63)
Wolfsburg 3 (Schafer 49, Grafite 56, 73) Att: 20,940

Karlsruhe 1 (Eggimann 29)
Duisburg 0 Att: 27,714

Friday, November 9
Duisburg 0
Bochum 2 (Imhof 29, Bechmann 84) Att: 24,259

Saturday, November 10
Borussia Dortmund 1 (Kringe 80)
Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (Amanatidis 55) Att: 75,300

Hansa Rostock 3 (Kern 18, 60, 74)
Energie Cottbus 2 (Da Silva 58, Skela 90) Att: 20,000

Hertha Berlin 1 (Andre Lima 87)
Hannover 0 Att: 34,213

Schalke 1 (Krstajic 12)
Hamburg 1 (Olic 35) Att: 61,482

Stuttgart 3 (Gomez 10, 42, Basturk 30)
Bayern Munich 1 (Toni 86) Att: 55,600

Werder Bremen 4 (Diego 25, 45, Hugo Almeida 66, Naldo 76)
Karlsruhe 0 Att: 39,669

Sunday, November 11
Arminia Bielefeld 3 (Kauf 63, Wichniarek 76, Zuma 90)
Nurnberg 1 (Wolf 43) Att: 18,000

Wolfsburg 1 (Friedrich og 70)
Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Barnetta 37, Kiessling 52) Att: 20,219

GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern	13	8	4	1	28	7	28
Werder	13	8	3	2	30	17	27
Hamburg	13	8	3	2	20	10	27
Karlsruhe	13	7	2	4	14	15	23
B Leverkusen	13	6	3	4	20	10	21
Hannover	13	6	3	4	17	17	21
Schalke	13	4	7	2	18	12	19
Hertha Berlin	13	6	1	6	17	17	19
Stuttgart	13	6	1	6	16	19	19
E Frankfurt	13	4	6	3	13	15	18
Wolfsburg	13	4	4	5	22	23	16
Bochum	13	4	3	6	20	22	15
B Dortmund	13	4	3	6	18	22	15
A Bielefeld	13	4	3	6	16	28	15
H Rostock	13	4	2	7	14	18	14
Nurnberg	13	2	3	8	16	24	9
Duisburg	13	3	0	10	12	21	9
E Cottbus	13	1	5	7	10	24	8

LEADING GOALSCORERS
9 Luca Toni (Bayern Munich)
8 Miroslav Klose (Bayern Munich)
7 Hugo Almeida (Werder Bremen)
7 Mario Gomez (Stuttgart)
7 Rafael Van der Vaart (Hamburg)

GREECE

Oct 20: Olympiakos 4 Panionios 1; AEK 1 Larisa 0.
Oct 21: Levadiakos 2 Xanthi 1; OFI 0 Asteras 3; Aris 3 PAOK 1; Apollon 2 Ergotelis 1; Veria 0 Panathinaikos 2; Atromitos 1 Iraklis 1.
Oct 27: Asteras 0 Aris 0; Iraklis 1 Levadiakos 0.
Oct 28: Xanthi 0 AEK 1; Ergotelis 3 Olympiakos 3; Panionios 3 Larisa 1; Veria 2 OFI 1; Panathinaikos 2 Atromitos 0; PAOK 4 Apollon 1.
Nov 3: Ergotelis 1 Panionios 1; Olympiakos 2 PAOK 1.
Nov 4: Atromitos 1 OFI 0; Apollon 2 Asteras 2; Levadiakos 0 Panathinaikos 4; Larisa 0 Xanthi 0; Aris 1 Veria 0; AEK 1 Iraklis 2.
Nov 10: Asteras 1 Olympiakos 0.
Nov 11: OFI 1 Levadiakos 2; PAOK 1 Ergotelis 0; Veria 0 Apollon 2; Atromitos 1 Aris 2; Panionios 3 Xanthi 2; Panathinaikos 2 AEK 1; Iraklis 1 Larisa 1.

GREECE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Panathinaikos	8	6	1	1	15	2	19
AEK	8	6	0	2	14	4	18
Aris	8	4	4	0	8	3	16
Olympiakos	8	4	3	1	17	9	15
Panionios	8	4	2	2	12	11	14
Atromitos	8	4	1	3	8	8	13
Asteras	8	3	3	2	7	5	12
PAOK	8	3	1	4	12	11	10
Iraklis	8	2	4	2	6	8	10
Xanthi	8	2	2	4	7	8	8
Apollon	8	2	2	4	9	13	8
Larisa	8	1	4	3	7	11	7
OFI	8	2	1	5	13	19	7
Levadiakos	8	2	1	5	8	18	7
Veria	8	1	3	4	5	10	6
Ergotelis	8	1	2	5	7	15	5

HOLLAND

Friday, October 19
De Graafschap 4 (Schone 66, Powel 77, Hese 83, De Groot 86)
Sparta 0 Att: 12,000

Saturday, October 20
Ajax 0
NEC 0 Att: 48,123

Feyenoord 1 (Van Bronckhorst 77)
Excelsior 0 Att: 47,000

Heracles 2 (Everton 33, Maas pen 88)
Vitesse 2 (Due 56, Sprockel 58) Att: 8,500

PSV 3 (Bakkal 24, Koevermans 51, 77)
VVV 1 (El Gaaouiri 66) Att: 33,600

Sunday, October 21
AZ 0
Heerenveen 1 (Afonso Alves 90) Att: 16,644

Groningen 1 (Meerdink 56)
Twente 0 Att: 18,971

Roda JC 1 (Bodor 27)
Utrecht 1 (Somers 61) Att: 14,000

Willem II 0
NAC 0 Att: 13,500

Friday, October 26
Vitesse 1 (Kolk 76)
Willem II 0 Att: 19,586

Saturday, October 27
Excelsior 1 (Korf 13)
Heracles 1 (Gluscevic 5) Att: 2,634

Roda JC 1 (Meeuwis pen 61)
De Graafschap 0 Att: 12,000

Twente 2 (N'Kufo 11, Huysegems 57)
Feyenoord 0 Att: 13,250

VVV 0
Heerenveen 4 (Bak Nielsen 3, Afonso Alves 12, 70, Matusiak 85) Att: 5,930

Sunday, October 28
NAC 2 (Lurling 19, pen 56)
AZ 3 (Opdam 5, Ari 39, Jenner 47) Att: 15,000

NEC 5 (El-Akchaoui pen 5, Davids 63, Van Beukering 74, 87, Olsson 78)
Groningen 1 (Van de Laak pen 7) Att: 12,000

Sparta 1 (Polak pen 77)
PSV 4 (Lazovic 1, Zonneveld 11, Farfan 26, Perez 70) Att: 10,450

Utrecht 0
Ajax 1 (Huntelaar 68) Att: 23,350

Friday, November 2
Willem II 1 (Kargbo 10)
VVV 2 (Auassar 73, Kahya 83) Att: 12,110

Saturday, November 3
AZ 4 (Cziommer 13, Jaliens 19, Ari 33, De Zeeuw 66)
NEC 0 Att: 16,333

Excelsior 4 (Den Ouden pen 34, 43, Voskamp 88, Luijckx 90)
Sparta 3 (Rose 17, Roberts 39, Boukhari 65) Att: 3,400

Heerenveen 2 (Bak Nielsen 31, Sulejmani 70)
PSV 1 (Lazovic 28) Att: 25,500

Sunday, November 4
Ajax 4 (Huntelaar 21, Suarez 41, Luque 46, Rommedahl 90)
Roda JC 2 (Lamah 38, Hadouir 75) Att: 48,621

Feyenoord 2 (De Guzman 54, Makaay pen 58)
De Graafschap 0 Att: 45,000

Groningen 0
Vitesse 0 Att: 19,000

Heracles 0
Twente 3 (Denneboom 24, N'Kufo 81, Engelaar 90) Att: 8,500

Utrecht 0
NAC 1 (Amoah 75) Att: 19,500

Friday, November 9
NEC 3 (Van Beukering 33, Lens 82, Nalbantoglu 90)
Heracles 0 Att: 11,937

Saturday, November 10
De Graafschap 1 (Fung a Wing 18)
Excelsior 1 (Van Guldener 87) Att: 12,000

Twente 1 (Wilkshire 24)
NAC 1 (Amoah 16) Att: 13,200

VVV 2 (Oost 59, Amrabat 87)
Sparta 0 Att: 5,842

Willem II 1 (Poepon 67)
Utrecht 4 (Nelisse 35, George 42, Pieters 79, Broerse 89) Att: 12,300

Sunday, November 11
Feyenoord 2 (Van Bronckhorst 28, De Guzman 74)
Ajax 2 (Rommedahl 52, De Jong 67) Att: 42,500

PSV 1 (Farfan 59)
AZ 1 (Ari 36) Att: 33,600

Roda JC 5 (Hadouir 1, Lamah 23, Oper 35, 51, Cisse 66)
Groningen 1 (Nevland 20) Att: 12,000

Vitesse 0
Heerenveen 1 (Bradley 50) Att: 19,221

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ajax	11	7	4	0	33	13	25
Feyenoord	11	8	1	2	21	9	25
PSV	11	7	3	1	25	6	24
Heerenveen	11	6	2	3	28	15	20
Twente	11	5	4	2	16	6	19
Roda JC	11	5	3	3	22	18	18
NAC	11	5	3	3	14	15	18
Vitesse	11	5	2	4	11	10	17
AZ	11	4	3	4	22	14	15
Utrecht	11	4	3	4	18	18	15
De Graafschap	11	4	3	4	15	17	15
Groningen	11	4	3	4	14	19	15
NEC	11	3	2	6	10	18	11
Excelsior	11	2	3	6	15	25	9
VVV	11	3	0	8	16	32	9
Willem II	11	1	3	7	6	18	6
Heracles	11	1	3	7	8	29	6
Sparta	11	0	5	6	15	27	5

LEADING GOALSCORERS
11 Klaas-Jan Huntelaar (Ajax)
10 Afonso Alves (Heerenveen)

HUNGARY

Oct 19: Diosgyor 2 Fehervar 0.
Oct 20: Honved 2 Gyor 2; Zalaegerszeg 4 Tatabanya 1; Kaposvar 1 Vasas 0; Ujpest 3 Paks 1; Debrecen 4 Sopron 2; Siofok 1 Rakospalota 0.
Oct 22: MTK 2 Nyiregyhaza 0.
Nov 2: Vasas 0 Honved 2.
Nov 3: Sopron 0 Siofok 0; Paks 2 Diosgyor 2; Nyiregyhaza 0 Kaposvar 2; Gyor 4 Ujpest 2; Tatabanya 1 MTK 3; Rakospalota 1 Zalaegerszeg 2.
Nov 5: Fehervar 0 Debrecen 0.
Nov 9: Diosgyor 1 Ujpest 4.
Nov 10: Debrecen 1 Paks 1; Siofok 1 Fehervar 0; Zalaegerszeg 4 Sopron 0; Kaposvar 4 Tatabanya 2; Honved 0 Nyiregyhaza 0; Vasas 1 Gyor 1.
Nov 12: MTK 3 Rakospalota 0.

HUNGARY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
MTK	14	9	4	1	33	12	31
Honved	14	9	3	2	28	14	30
Debrecen	14	8	4	2	31	15	28
Ujpest	14	8	4	2	31	16	28
Kaposvar	14	7	4	3	21	19	25
Zalaegerszeg	14	7	3	4	30	20	24
Gyor	14	5	7	2	23	18	22
Nyiregyhaza	14	5	4	5	10	13	19
Fehervar	14	5	2	7	22	21	17
Siofok	14	3	5	6	15	18	14
Vasas	14	3	5	6	15	23	14
Paks	14	3	4	7	22	30	13
Diosgyor	14	2	7	5	15	23	13
Rakospalota	14	4	1	9	12	24	13
Sopron	14	2	5	7	9	23	11
Tatabanya	14	0	2	12	15	43	2

ICELAND

ICELAND – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Valur	18	11	5	2	41	20	38
FH	18	11	4	3	42	26	37
IA	18	8	6	4	34	27	30
Fylkir	18	8	5	5	23	18	29
Breidablik	18	5	9	4	29	20	24
Keflavik	18	5	6	7	26	32	21
Fram	18	3	7	8	25	31	16
KR	18	3	7	8	17	30	16
HK	18	4	4	10	17	35	16
Vikingur	18	3	5	10	15	30	14

Relegated: Vikingur
Promoted: Grindavik, Throttur, Fjolnir

ITALY

Saturday, October 20
Reggina 0
Inter 1 (Adriano 18) Att: 20,000

Roma 4 (Totti pen 30, Perrotta 42, De Rossi 52, Pizarro 80)
Napoli 4 (Lavezzi 2, Hamsik 46, Gargano 64, Zalayeta 84) Att: 27,000

Sunday, October 21
Atalanta 2 (Ferreira Pinto 45, Doni pen 67)
Torino 2 (Ventola 75, Motta 87) Att: 10,962

Cagliari 1 (Matri 46)
Catania 1 (Tedesco 11) Att: 8,000

Fiorentina 3 (Pazzini 15, Mutu 31, Vieri 71)
Siena 0 Att: 25,000

Juventus 1 (Del Piero 36)
Genoa 0 Att: 21,414

Livorno 0
Lazio 1 (Pandev 49) Att: 7,500

Milan 0
Empoli 1 (Saudati 55) Att: 50,991

Sampdoria 3 (Montella 25, Bellucci 46, 58)
Parma 0 Att: 30,000

Udinese 1 (Gyan 65)
Palermo 1 (Amauri 17) Att: 10,000

Saturday, October 27
Napoli 3 (Gargano 49, Domizzi pen 62, pen 69)
Juventus 1 (Del Piero 46) Att: 56,022

Torino 2 (Rosina 71, Ferri og 85)
Cagliari 0 Att: 18,226

Sunday, October 28
Catania 2 (Mascara 1, Martinez 43)
Sampdoria 0 Att: 20,000

Empoli 0
Atalanta 1 (Doni 75) Att: 5,000

Genoa 0
Fiorentina 0 Att: 33,000

Lazio 0
Udinese 1 (Gyan 79) Att: 15,000

Milan 0
Roma 1 (Vucinic 72) Att: 60,205

Palermo 0
Inter 0 Att: 33,972

Parma 3 (Morrone 10, Paci 54, Morfeo 74)
Livorno 2 (Tavano 23, pen 50) Att: 20,000

Siena 0
Reggina 0 Att: 10,000

Wednesday, October 31
Atalanta 2 (Capelli 50, Doni 80)
Cagliari 2 (Fini pen 39, Matri 70) Att: 10,152

Fiorentina 1 (Vieri 62)
Napoli 0 Att: 32,568

Inter 4 (Cordoba 8, Cambiasso 50, Suazo 74, Cruz pen 86)
Genoa 1 (Konko 73) Att: 47,230

Juventus 3 (Trezeguet pen 51, 63, 70)
Empoli 0 Att: 19,075

Palermo 1 (Amauri pen 87)
Parma 1 (Morrone 3) Att: 22,680

Reggina 1 (Amoruso 37)
Livorno 3 (Pulzetti 34, Valdez og 78, Rossini 90) Att: 10,157

Roma 3 (Vucinic 18, Mancini 42, Perrotta 56)
Lazio 2 (Rocchi 11, Ledesma 70) Att: 54,860

Sampdoria 0
Milan 5 (Kaka 47, Gilardino 53, 62, Gourcuff 76, Seedorf 81) Att: 22,095

Siena 1 (De Ceglie 80)
Catania 1 (Vargas 89) Att: 7,898

Udinese 2 (Floro Flores 25, Inler 52)
Torino 1 (Ventola 62) Att: 13,117

Saturday, November 3
Lazio 0
Fiorentina 1 (Pazzini 19) Att: 19,165

Milan 0
Torino 0 Att: 54,980

Sunday, November 4
Cagliari 0
Sampdoria 3 (Volpi 33, Caracciolo 39, Maggio 45) Att: 10,000

Catania 1 (Spinesi 82)
Atalanta 2 (Langella 57, 59) Att: 16,101

Empoli 2 (Vannucchi 68, Giovinco 90)
Roma 2 (Giuly 13, Brighi 32) Att: 10,000

Genoa 3 (Leon 59, 66, Borriello 82)
Palermo 3 (Cavani 8, Brienza 76, Amauri 90) Att: 24,000

Juventus 1 (Camoranesi 77)
Inter 1 (Cruz 41) Att: 22,722

Livorno 0
Udinese 0 Att: 8,000

Napoli 1 (Lavezzi 90)
Reggina 1 (Vigiani 53) Att: 40,000

Parma 2 (Corradi 23, Matteini 79)
Siena 2 (De Ceglie 33, Galloppa 90) Att: 12,000

Saturday, November 10
Palermo 2 (Tedesco 57, 67)
Napoli 1 (Bogliacino 54) Att: 25,138

Sampdoria 3 (Maggio 5, Montella 40, Sammarco 90)
Empoli 0 Att: 19,327

Sunday, November 11
Fiorentina 1 (Pazzini 28)
Udinese 2 (Quagliarella 23, Di Natale 63) Att: 27,882

Parma 2 (Gasbarroni pen 43, Pisanu 57)
Juventus 2 (Legrottaglie 75, Iaquinta 81) Att: 22,278

Reggina 2 (Amoruso 31, Joelson 80)
Genoa 0 Att: 10,312

Siena 2 (Maccarone 18, Loria 90)
Livorno 3 (Tavano 17, Bergvold 31, Knezevic 42) Att: 8,532

Torino 1 (Malonga 15)
Catania 1 (Martinez 63) Att: 18,597

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Inter	11	7	4	0	22	7	25
Fiorentina	12	6	5	1	19	9	23
Juventus	12	6	4	2	24	13	22
Roma	11	6	4	1	25	16	22
Udinese	12	6	4	2	14	13	22
Atalanta	11	4	6	1	15	13	18
Palermo	12	4	6	2	17	16	18
Sampdoria	12	5	2	5	14	14	17
Napoli	12	4	3	5	19	15	15
Catania	12	3	6	3	11	11	15
Milan	11	3	5	3	18	9	14
Genoa	12	3	5	4	12	17	14
Torino	12	2	7	3	13	14	13
Parma	12	2	6	4	15	21	12
Lazio	11	2	4	5	11	16	10
Siena	12	1	6	5	12	18	9
Cagliari	11	2	3	6	10	18	9
Reggina	12	1	6	5	9	18	9
Livorno	12	2	3	7	14	24	9
Empoli	12	2	3	7	7	19	9

LEADING GOALSCORERS
10 David Trezeguet (Juventus)
7 Zlatan Ibrahimovic (Inter)
7 Kaka (Milan)
7 Francesco Totti (Roma)

NORWAY

Oct 20: Aalesund 2 Brann 1.
Oct 21: Odd Grenland 2 Start 0; Fredrikstad 2 Sandefjord 0; Lyn 3 Valerenga 1; Tromso 2 Stromsgodset 2; Lillestrom 4 Rosenborg 1.
Oct 22: Viking 2 Stabaek 1.
Oct 28: Brann 5 Viking 2; Stabaek 5 Tromso 0; Fredrikstad 1 Stromsgodset 1; Sandefjord 0 Odd Grenland 2; Rosenborg 3 Lyn 0; Start 0 Lillestrom 0; Valerenga 2 Aalesund 1.
Nov 3: Viking 2 Valerenga 1; Lyn 4 Start 1; Stromsgodset 0 Stabaek 5; Lillestrom 1 Sandefjord 1; Aalesund 1 Rosenborg 2; Odd Grenland 2 Fredrikstad 0; Tromso 3 Brann 0.

NORWAY – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brann	26	17	3	6	59	39	54
Stabaek	26	14	6	6	53	35	48
Viking	26	14	5	7	50	40	47
Lillestrom	26	12	8	6	47	28	44
Rosenborg	26	12	5	9	53	39	41
Tromso	26	12	4	10	45	44	40
Valerenga	26	10	6	10	34	34	36
Fredrikstad	26	9	9	8	37	40	36
Lyn	26	10	4	12	43	46	34
Stromsgodset	26	8	6	12	34	47	30
Aalesund	26	9	3	14	40	56	30
Odd Grenland	26	8	3	15	33	43	27
Start	26	6	8	12	34	44	26
Sandefjord	26	4	4	18	26	53	16

Relegated: Odd Grenland (after play-off), Start, Sandefjord
Promoted: Molde, Ham-Kam, Bodo/Glimt (after play-off)

POLAND

Oct 19: Legia 0 Odra 1; Ruch Chorzow 1 Belchatow 1; Jagiellonia 0 Zaglebie Lubin 0; Zaglebie Sosnowiec 2 Korona 3; Groclin 1 Lech 0.
Oct 20: Cracovia 1 Wisla Krakow 2; Polonia Bytom 1 Widzew 1; LKS 0 Gornik Zabrze 1.
Oct 26: Belchatow 1 LKS 0; Lech 3 Cracovia 1.
Oct 27: Zaglebie Lubin 2 Zaglebie Sosnowiec 1; Ruch Chorzow 2 Polonia Bytom 0; Odra 1 Jagiellonia 3; Widzew 1 Groclin 0; Korona 3 Gornik Zabrze 2.
Oct 28: Wisla Krakow 1 Legia 0.
Nov 2: Gornik Zabrze 2 Belchatow 0.
Nov 3: Zaglebie Sosnowiec 0 Widzew 0; Jagiellonia 4 Lech 2; Polonia Bytom 1 Odra 0; Cracovia 1 Zaglebie Lubin 2; LKS 0 Wisla Krakow 1; Groclin 4 Korona 0.
Nov 4: Legia 2 Ruch Chorzow 0.
Nov 9: Legia 0 Jagiellonia 0.
Nov 10: Ruch Chorzow 0 LKS 0; Lech 1 Polonia Bytom 0; Belchatow 2 Zaglebie Sosnowiec 0; Wisla Krakow 3 Groclin 0; Odra 0 Cracovia 1; Zaglebie Lubin 1 Gornik Zabrze 1.
Nov 11: Widzew 0 Korona 2.

POLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wisla K	14	12	2	0	36	6	38
Korona	14	10	1	3	21	15	31
Legia	14	9	1	4	22	6	28
Lech	14	8	2	4	28	19	26
Groclin	14	8	1	5	22	16	25
Gornik Z	14	7	2	5	20	19	23
Zaglebie L	14	6	4	4	17	15	22
Belchatow	14	5	5	4	13	13	20
Jagiellonia	14	5	4	5	15	21	19
Cracovia	14	5	1	8	11	15	16
Polonia B	14	4	2	8	8	22	14
Ruch C	14	3	4	7	15	23	13
Widzew	14	2	6	6	11	17	12
Odra	14	3	3	8	13	21	12
LKS	14	1	5	8	6	12	8
Zaglebie S*	14	2	1	11	12	30	3

**4pts deducted for the club's part in Poland's match-fixing scandal*

PORTUGAL

Friday, October 26
Guimaraes 2 (Mrdakovic 47, Rabiola 90)
Uniao Leiria 1 (Joao Paulo 16)

Saturday, October 27
Belenenses 0
Academica 0

Nacional 0
Sporting Lisbon 0

Setubal 3 (Auri 26, Edinho 67, Bruno Gama 79)
Pacos Ferreira 1 (Luiz Carlos pen 62)

Sunday, October 28
Benfica 2 (Cardozo pen 18, Adu 86)
Maritimo 1 (Kanu 8)

Estrela Amadora 0
Boavista 0

Monday, October 29
Naval 1 (Saulo 1)
Sporting Braga 1 (Linz pen 58)

Porto 3 (Lopez 5, 78, Sektioui 8)
Leixoes 0

Friday, November 2
Porto 1 (Helder Postiga 20)
Belenenses 1 (Jose Pedro 49)

Saturday, November 3
Leixoes 3 (Roberto 36, China 45, Goncalves 74)
Sporting Braga 0

Pacos Ferreira 1 (Tiago Valente 29)
Benfica 2 (Rodriguez 21, Katsouranis 85)

Sunday, November 4
Academica 3 (Lito 24, 47, 58)
Estrela Amadora 3 (Mauricio 36, Anselmo 61, Wagnao 90)

Boavista 3 (Fleurival 19, Jorge Ribeiro 24, Ricardo Silva 69)
Setubal 3 (Claudio Pitbull 45, Auri 56, Edinho 60)

Sporting Lisbon 4 (Joao Moutinho 9, Liedson 62, Vukcevic 85, Gladstone 90)
Naval 1 (Diego 27)

Uniao Leiria 1 (Paulo Cesar 90)
Nacional 3 (Juliano Spadacio 8, Juninho 53, Gabriel 84)

Monday, November 5
Maritimo 0
Guimaraes 1 (Ghilas 71)

Friday, November 9
Belenenses 1 (Jose Pedro 4)
Leixoes 1 (Nwoko 80)

Saturday, November 10
Guimaraes 0
Pacos Ferreira 0

Sunday, November 11
Benfica 6 (Cardozo 19, Pereira 63, Rodriguez 67, Ricardo Silva og 81, Nuno Gomes pen 86, 89)
Boavista 1 (Jorge Ribeiro 58)

Estrela Amadora 2 (Mauricio 86, Mateus pen 90)
Porto 2 (Lopez 25, Raul Meireles 50)

Naval 1 (Marcelinho 59)
Uniao Leiria 0

Setubal 3 (Matheus 19, Elias 20, Claudio Pitbull pen 63)
Academica 1 (Fofana 58)

Sporting Braga 3 (Frechaut 27, Linz 64, Jorginho 66)
Sporting Lisbon 0

Monday, November 12
Nacional 0
Maritimo 2 (Makukula 26, Wenio 65)

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Porto	10	8	2	0	18	4	26
Benfica	10	6	4	0	19	5	22
Guimaraes	10	5	4	1	12	8	19
Setubal	10	4	6	0	18	10	18
Sporting L	10	5	3	2	16	8	18
Maritimo	10	5	2	3	13	6	17
S Braga	10	4	2	4	11	11	14
Belenenses	10	3	4	3	10	11	13
Leixoes	10	1	7	2	10	11	10
Nacional	10	2	4	4	7	10	10
E Amadora	10	1	6	3	11	13	9
Naval	10	2	3	5	7	18	9
Academica	10	1	5	4	8	15	8
P Ferreira	10	1	3	6	7	15	6
Boavista	10	0	6	4	7	18	6
Uniao Leiria	10	0	3	7	5	16	3

LEADING GOALSCORERS
9 Lisandro Lopez (Porto)
5 Ariza Makukula (Maritimo)
5 Matheus (Setubal)
5 Nuno Gomes (Benfica)

ROMANIA

Oct 19: Univ Craiova 1 Univ Cluj 1.
Oct 20: Gloria Buzau 0 Dacia 1; Poli Timisoara 4 Otelul 1; Poli Iasi 0 Rapid 2.
Oct 21: Pandurii 0 Dinamo 1; Ceahlaul 1 Vaslui 1; Farul 1 UTA 0; CFR Cluj 2 Urziceni 0.
Oct 24: Farul 0 Dinamo 1.
Oct 26: UTA 0 Poli Iasi 0.
Oct 27: Otelul 2 Univ Craiova 1; Gloria Bistrita 3 Gloria Buzau 2; Univ Cluj 2 Steaua 1; Dinamo 1 Poli Timisoara 1.
Oct 28: Vaslui 1 Farul 1; Urziceni 1 Pandurii 0; Dacia 2 Ceahlaul 1; Rapid 1 CFR Cluj 2.
Oct 30: Gloria Buzau 3 Univ Cluj 2.
Oct 31: Urziceni 0 Dinamo 0; Poli Iasi 0 Vaslui 1; Ceahlaul 2 Gloria Bistrita 0; Steaua 3 Otelul 1; Univ Craiova 2 Poli Timisoara 1.
Nov 1: Pandurii 1 Rapid 3; Farul 1 Dacia 1; CFR Cluj 2 UTA 0.
Nov 3: Univ Cluj 1 Ceahlaul 1; Univ Craiova 1 Dinamo 1; Otelul 2 Gloria Buzau 3.
Nov 4: Gloria Bistrita 1 Farul 0; Vaslui 0 CFR Cluj 2; UTA 3 Pandurii 3; Dacia 2 Poli Iasi 1; Rapid 1 Urziceni 1; Poli Timisoara 2 Steaua 0.
Nov 9: Poli Iasi 2 Gloria Bistrita 0; Pandurii 1 Vaslui 1.
Nov 10: Farul 0 Univ Cluj 0; Gloria Buzau 2 Poli Timisoara 1; Steaua 1 Univ Craiova 0; Urziceni 1 UTA 0.
Nov 11: CFR Cluj 1 Dacia 0; Dinamo 0 Rapid 2; Ceahlaul 0 Otelul 1.
Nov 12: Steaua 0 Pandurii 0.

ROMANIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CFR Cluj	15	12	3	0	25	8	39
Urziceni	15	9	4	2	20	11	31
Rapid	14	8	5	1	24	11	29
Poli Timisoara	15	8	4	3	31	22	28
Dinamo	15	7	5	3	24	14	26
Vaslui	15	7	5	3	24	15	26
Steaua	14	7	4	3	13	9	25
Gloria Bistrita	14	6	3	5	17	20	21
Otelul	15	6	0	9	21	32	18
Ceahlaul	14	5	2	7	15	17	17
Gloria Buzau	15	5	2	8	15	27	17
Dacia	15	4	4	7	15	19	16
Poli Iasi	15	4	2	9	14	20	14
Univ Craiova	15	4	2	9	13	19	14
Pandurii	15	3	4	8	14	18	13
Farul	15	3	4	8	7	16	13
UTA	15	2	5	8	13	20	11
Univ Cluj	15	1	6	8	18	25	9

RUSSIA

Oct 20: Spartak Moscow 3 FC Moscow 1; Tom 0 CSKA 1; Lokomotiv 1 Luch-Energiya 1.
Oct 21: Amkar 1 Spartak Nalchik 1; Kryliya Sovetov 3 Rubin 0; Zenit 4 Khimki 1; Rostov 1 Saturn 3; Dinamo 1 Kuban 0.
Oct 27: Khimki 3 Luch-Energiya 0; FC Moscow 3 Amkar 1; Rostov 0 Dinamo 0; Rubin 2 Kuban 2.
Oct 28: Saturn 0 Spartak Moscow 0; CSKA 4 Kryliya Sovetov 2; Lokomotiv 0 Tom 0; Spartak Nalchik 0 Zenit 3.
Nov 3: Tom 3 Khimki 1; Luch-Energiya 2 Spartak Nalchik 1; Zenit 1 FC Moscow 0; Amkar 3 Saturn 1; Dinamo 0 Rubin 1; Spartak Moscow 3 Rostov 0; Kuban 0 CSKA 1; Kryliya Sovetov 3 Lokomotiv 1.
Nov 11: Rostov 2 Amkar 0; Saturn 0 Zenit 1; FC Moscow 3 Luch-Energiya 1; Spartak Nalchik 1 Tom 0; Khimki 4 Kryliya Sovetov 1; Lokomotiv 2 Kuban 3; Rubin 0 CSKA 1; Spartak Moscow 2 Dinamo 1.

RUSSIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zenit	30	18	7	5	54	32	61
Spartak M	30	17	8	5	50	30	59
CSKA	30	14	11	5	43	24	53
FC Moscow	30	15	7	8	40	32	52
Saturn	30	11	12	7	34	28	45
Dinamo	30	11	8	11	37	35	41
Lokomotiv	30	11	8	11	39	42	41
Amkar	30	10	11	9	30	27	41
Khimki	30	9	10	11	32	33	37
Rubin	30	10	5	15	31	39	35
Tom	30	8	11	11	37	35	35
Spartak N	30	8	9	13	29	38	33
Kryliya S	30	8	8	14	35	46	32
Luch-Energiya	30	8	8	14	26	39	32
Kuban	30	7	11	12	27	38	32
Rostov	30	2	12	16	18	44	18

Relegated: Kuban, Rostov
Promoted: Shinnik Yaroslavl, Terek Grozny

SCOTLAND

Saturday, October 20
Falkirk 1 (Finnigan 2)
Kilmarnock 1 (Wright 10) Att: 5,143

Hearts 1 (Kingston 90)
Dundee United 3 (Robertson 14, 25, Robson pen 89) Att: 16,661

Motherwell 2 (McCormack 35, 37)
Hibernian 1 (Fletcher pen 31) Att: 7,071

Rangers 3 (Novo 28, pen 76, Ferguson 54)
Celtic 0 Att: 50,428

St Mirren 1 (Mehmet 35)
Gretna 0 Att: 3,646

Sunday, October 21
Inverness 1 (Wyness 58)
Aberdeen 2 (Young 8, Tokely og 61) Att: 6,023

Saturday, October 27
Celtic 3 (McDonald 42, 59, pen 88)
Motherwell 0 Att: 57,633

Gretna 0
Inverness 4 (Wyness pen 2, Cowie 31, Wilson 73, McBain 75) Att: 1,092

Hibernian 0
St Mirren 1 (Mehmet 13) Att: 13,884

Kilmarnock 3 (Wales 55, Nish pen 72, Gibson 77)
Hearts 1 (Tall 90) Att: 6,373

Sunday, October 28
Aberdeen 1 (Severin pen 45)
Falkirk 1 (Cregg 68) Att: 10,399

Dundee United 2 (Wilkie 28, Robson pen 54)
Rangers 1 (Cousin pen 51) Att: 12,129

Saturday, November 3
Aberdeen 2 (Aluko 45, Miller 90)
Dundee United 0 Att: 11,964

Falkirk 2 (Barr 41, Barrett 50)
Gretna 0 Att: 4,843

Kilmarnock 1 (Wright 55)
Celtic 2 (McDonald 34, 36) Att: 8,260

Motherwell 1 (Porter 29)
St Mirren 1 (Kean 45) Att: 5,123

Rangers 2 (Boyd 1, Cuellar 63)
Inverness 0 Att: 48,898

Sunday, November 4
Hibernian 1 (Jones 18)
Hearts 1 (Nade 46) Att: 17,015

Saturday, November 10
Dundee United 2 (Hunt 8, Bauben 90)
Kilmarnock 0 Att: 6,065

Gretna 0
Hibernian 1 (Fletcher 52) Att: 2,666

Inverness 0
Motherwell 3 (Clarkson 15, 53, D Smith 87) Att: 3,608

Sunday, November 11
Hearts 4 (Driver 3, Velicka 13, Tall 53, Nade 62)
Aberdeen 1 (De Visscher 38) Att: 17,122

SCOTLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Celtic	12	9	1	2	34	11	28
Rangers	12	8	1	3	30	11	25
Hibernian	13	7	4	2	21	13	25
Dundee Utd	13	8	1	4	19	12	25
Motherwell	13	6	2	5	15	15	20
Hearts	13	5	3	5	23	23	18
Aberdeen	13	5	3	5	19	19	18
Kilmarnock	13	4	4	5	15	18	16
St Mirren	12	4	2	6	8	19	14
Falkirk	12	3	3	6	17	25	12
Inverness	13	3	1	9	15	28	10
Gretna	13	1	1	11	9	31	4

LEADING GOALSCORERS
10 Scott McDonald (Celtic)
6 Steven Fletcher (Hibernian)

SERBIA

Oct 20: Napredak 0 Mladost Lucani 1; Banat 2 Smederevo 3; Borac 1 Cukaricki 1.
Oct 21: OFK 0 Red Star 2; Partizan 2 Hajduk Kula 1; Vojvodina 3 Bezanija 1.
Oct 27: Cukaricki 2 Mladost Lucani 0; Bezanija 0 Partizan 2; Hajduk Kula 0 Banat 0; Smederevo 0 OFK 1.
Oct 28: Borac 2 Vojvodina 4; Red Star 1 Napredak 1.
Oct 31: Napredak 3 Smederevo 1; OFK 3 Hajduk Kula 1; Banat 2 Bezanija 1; Partizan 0 Borac 0; Vojvodina 0 Cukaricki 0; Mladost Lucani 1 Red Star 1.
Nov 3: Cukaricki 0 Red Star 1; Banat 2 Borac 1; OFK 1 Bezanija 0; Napredak 1 Hajduk Kula 0; Mladost Lucani 3 Smederevo 2.
Nov 4: Partizan 3 Vojvodina 3.
Nov 10: Vojvodina 1 Banat 0; Partizan 1 Cukaricki 1; Hajduk Kula 2 Mladost Lucani 2; Bezanija 2 Napredak 1; Borac 2 OFK 0.
Nov 11: Smederevo 2 Red Star 5.

SERBIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Partizan	13	8	5	0	27	12	29
Vojvodina	13	7	5	1	21	13	26
Red Star	12	6	6	0	18	7	24
OFK	13	6	3	4	16	13	21
Borac	13	5	4	4	12	11	19
Banat	13	4	4	5	14	16	16
Mladost L	13	3	7	3	12	15	16
Cukaricki	13	3	6	4	9	12	15
Napredak	13	3	3	7	9	15	12
Smederevo	13	3	2	8	12	21	11
Hajduk K	12	2	4	6	9	14	10
Bezanija	13	2	1	10	9	19	7

SPAIN

Saturday, October 20
Deportivo La Coruna 2 (Xisco 28, Bodipo 88)
Valencia 4 (Joaquin pen 9, Baraja 13, Morientes 38, 73) Att: 15,000

Espanyol 2 (Riera 1, Tamudo 53)
Real Madrid 1 (Sergio Ramos 90) Att: 40,000

Levante 0
Sevilla 2 (Luis Fabiano 6, pen 13) Att: 12,276

Villarreal 3 (Santi Cazorla 2, Marcos Senna pen 13, pen 34)
Barcelona 1 (Bojan 24) Att: 22,000

Sunday, October 21
Almeria 2 (Felipe Melo pen 51, Negredo 69)
Osasuna 0 Att: 14,000

Atletico Madrid 4 (Luis Garcia 10, Forlan 34, Rodriguez 64, pen 90)
Zaragoza 0 Att: 48,000

Betis 1 (Xisco 62)
Racing Santander 1 (Jorge Lopez 86) Att: 34,000

Getafe 2 (Kepa 54, Javi Casquero 59)
Murcia 0 Att: 13,000

Recreativo 0
Mallorca 2 (Guiza 1, Tuni 78) Att: 18,000

Valladolid 1 (Victor pen 69)
Athletic Bilbao 2 (Aduritz 8, 31) Att: 18,000

Saturday, October 27
Athletic Bilbao 0
Betis 0 Att: 36,000

Mallorca 2 (Arango 2, Guiza 69)
Espanyol 2 (Arango og 20, Tamudo 26) Att: 18,000

Sunday, October 28
Barcelona 2 (Henry 38, Messi pen 80)
Almeria 0 Att: 79,253

Levante 0
Atletico Madrid 1 (Forlan 27) Att: 16,281

Murcia 1 (Regueiro 46)
Recreativo 0 Att: 23,390

Osasuna 2 (Dady 72, 78)
Valladolid 2 (Alvaro Rubio 35, Jonathan Sesma 52) Att: 16,307

Racing Santander 2 (Serrano 40, Jorge Lopez 74)
Getafe 0 Att: 16,695

Real Madrid 3 (Van Nistelrooy pen 8, Raul 79, Robinho 89)
Deportivo La Coruna 1 (Xisco 2) Att: 69,000

Sevilla 3 (Kanoute 10, Poulsen 73, Luis Fabiano 86)
Valencia 0 Att: 45,000

Zaragoza 4 (Ricardo Oliveira 37, Oscar 49, Milito pen 66, Sergio Garcia 78)
Villarreal 1 (Pires 81) Att: 32,000

Wednesday, October 31
Almeria 0
Zaragoza 1 (Milito pen 78) Att: 12,000

Atletico Madrid 4 (Maniche 2, Aguero 16, Rodriguez 69, Jurado 89)
Sevilla 3 (Luis Fabiano 14, 90, Ze Castro og 44) Att: 50,000

Betis 0
Osasuna 3 (Crutxaga 42, Dady 52, Vela 55) Att: 35,000

Deportivo La Coruna 1 (Guardado pen 41)
Mallorca 1 (Guiza 11) Att: 14,000

Getafe 2 (Javi Casquero 8, Uche 29)
Athletic Bilbao 0 Att: 11,000

Recreativo 0
Racing Santander 0 Att: 16,000

Valencia 1 (Angulo 59)
Real Madrid 5 (Raul 1, Van Nistelrooy 25, 37, Sergio Ramos 30, Robinho 65) Att: 49,500

Villarreal 3 (Franco 4, Rossi pen 16, Cygan 38)
Levante 0 Att: 18,000

Thursday, November 1
Espanyol 0
Murcia 0 Att: 11,150

Valladolid 1 (Llorente 16)
Barcelona 1 (Ronaldinho 42) Att: 26,000

Saturday, November 3
Mallorca 0
Valencia 2 (Morientes 45, 61) Att: 18,000

Sevilla 2 (Keita 19, Luis Fabiano 21)
Real Madrid 0 Att: 45,500

Sunday, November 4
Athletic Bilbao 2 (Etxeberria 51, 61)
Recreativo 0 Att: 36,000

Atletico Madrid 3 (Pablo Ibanez 9, Simao 24, Aguero 61)
Villarreal 4 (Rossi 30, Fuentes 41, Nihat 69, 89) Att: 53,000

Barcelona 3 (Henry 32, Ronaldinho 52, 90)
Betis 0 Att: 73,704

Levante 3 (Rigano 1, 15, 34)
Almeria 0 Att: 12,950

Murcia 0
Deportivo La Coruna 2 (Xisco 55, Guardado 71) Att: 25,000

Osasuna 0
Getafe 2 (Pablo pen 80, Granero 81) Att: 16,124

Racing Santander 1 (Tchite pen 54)
Espanyol 1 (Tamudo pen 90) Att: 16,848

Zaragoza 2 (Ricardo Oliveira 13, Milito 89)
Valladolid 3 (Victor 28, 30, Alvaro Rubio 32) Att: 31,000

Saturday, November 10
Getafe 2 (Del Moral 27, Albin 90)
Barcelona 0 Att: 14,000

Valencia 3 (Ivan Helguera 12, Villa 26, 51)
Murcia 0 Att: 40,000

Sunday, November 11
Almeria 0
Atletico Madrid 0 Att: 18,000

Betis 2 (Pavone 80, 90)
Zaragoza 1 (D'Alessandro 34) Att: 40,000

Deportivo La Coruna 0
Racing Santander 1 (Tchite 68) Att: 21,000

Espanyol 2 (Tamudo 39, Ocio og 89)
Athletic Bilbao 1 (Gabilondo 2) Att: 24,800

Real Madrid 4 (Robinho 11, 16, Raul 62, Van Nistelrooy 72)
Mallorca 3 (Borja Valero 13, 36, Guiza 57) Att: 78,000

Recreativo 1 (Carlos Martins 69)
Osasuna 0 Att: 15,000

Valladolid 1 (Jonathan Sesma 63)
Levante 0 Att: 15,420

Villarreal 3 (Franco 31, 68, Fernandez pen 86)
Sevilla 2 (Kanoute 35, Luis Fabiano 50) Att: 20,000

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Madrid	12	9	1	2	29	12	28
Villarreal	12	9	0	3	25	18	27
Barcelona	12	7	3	2	23	10	24
Valencia	12	8	0	4	20	19	24
Espanyol	12	6	4	2	17	13	22
At Madrid	12	6	3	3	23	14	21
R Santander	12	5	5	2	10	9	20
Zaragoza	12	5	2	5	19	19	17
Mallorca	12	4	4	4	21	19	16
Sevilla	11	5	0	6	23	17	15
Getafe	12	4	2	6	13	15	14
Ath Bilbao	12	3	4	5	10	14	13
Murcia	12	3	4	5	8	13	13
Valladolid	12	3	4	5	16	22	13
Osasuna	11	3	3	5	13	14	12
Almeria	12	3	3	6	10	14	12
Dep Coruna	12	3	3	6	10	17	12
Recreativo	12	3	3	6	8	15	12
Betis	12	2	5	5	10	16	11
Levante	12	1	1	10	6	24	4

LEADING GOALSCORERS
8 Luis Fabiano (Sevilla)
7 Sergio Aguero (Atletico Madrid)
7 Daniel Guiza (Mallorca)
7 Lionel Messi (Barcelona)
7 Giuseppe Rossi (Villarreal)

SWEDEN

Oct 20: Elfsborg 0 Orebro 2.
Oct 21: Gefle 4 Helsingborgs 0; Brommapojkarna 1 Kalmar 2; Trelleborgs 1 Hammarby 0.
Oct 22: AIK 0 IFK Gothenburg 1; GAIS 1 Malmo 2; Halmstads 1 Djurgardens 2.
Oct 28: Hammarby 4 GAIS 0; Helsingborgs 9 Halmstads 0; Orebro 1 Gefle 2; Kalmar 2 AIK 0; Malmo 1 Elfsborg 2; Djurgardens 0 Brommapojkarna 1; IFK Gothenburg 2 Trelleborgs 0.

SWEDEN – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
IFK Goth'burg	26	14	7	5	45	23	49
Kalmar	26	15	3	8	43	32	48
Djurgardens	26	13	7	6	39	24	46
Elfsborg	26	10	10	6	39	30	40
AIK	26	10	8	8	30	27	38
Hammarby	26	11	3	12	35	31	36
Halmstads	26	9	9	8	33	41	36
Helsingborgs	26	9	8	9	49	37	35
Malmo	26	9	7	10	29	28	34
Gefle	26	9	7	10	29	30	34
GAIS	26	7	8	11	24	37	29
Orebro	26	6	7	13	28	45	25
Trelleborgs	26	5	8	13	22	38	23
Bromm'karna	26	5	8	13	21	43	23

Relegated: Brommapojkarna
Promoted: Norrkoping, Ljungskile, Sundsvall

SWITZERLAND

Oct 27: Neuchatel Xamax 1 Sion 3; Grasshopper 1 Aarau 1; Lucerne 1 St Gallen 1.
Oct 28: Thun 1 Zurich 1; Basle 4 Young Boys 0.
Oct 31: Grasshopper 1 Lucerne 1; Sion 1 Basle 1; St Gallen 2 Zurich 3.
Nov 1: Young Boys 3 Neuchatel Xamax 2; Aarau 5 Thun 0.
Nov 3: Zurich 4 Sion 1; Basle 2 Grasshopper 0.
Nov 4: Thun 0 Young Boys 0; Lucerne 0 Aarau 0; Neuchatel Xamax 1 St Gallen 1.
Nov 10: Grasshopper 2 Thun 1; Sion 5 St Gallen 1.
Nov 11: Young Boys 1 Zurich 1; Basle 3 Lucerne 2; Aarau 3 Neuchatel Xamax 2.

SWITZERLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Basle	16	11	3	2	36	18	36
Zurich	16	9	6	1	40	16	33
Young Boys	16	7	6	3	35	28	27
Sion	16	6	3	7	22	24	21
Aarau	16	4	8	4	24	23	20
Grasshopper	16	4	5	7	23	29	17
Neuchatel X	16	3	7	6	22	27	16
Lucerne	16	2	10	4	23	32	16
Thun	16	3	5	8	15	24	14
St Gallen	16	3	3	10	17	36	12

TURKEY

Oct 20: Rizespor 2 Bursaspor 0; Genclerbirligi 1 Kayserispor 1; Gaziantepspor 1 Denizlispor 2; Istanbul BB 2 Kasimpasa 0; Trabzonspor 2 Besiktas 3; Fenerbahce 4 Konyaspor 1.
Oct 21: Galatasaray 0 Ankaraspor 0.
Oct 22: Genclerbirligi Oftas 2 Ankaragucu 1; Sivasspor 1 Manisaspor 0.
Oct 26: Kayserispor 1 Trabzonspor 0.
Oct 27: Ankaraspor 2 Genclerbirligi 0; Bursaspor 1 Gaziantepspor 1; Manisaspor 0 Genclerbirligi Oftas 2; Kasimpasa 1 Fenerbahce 2.
Oct 28: Konyaspor 2 Sivasspor 1; Ankaragucu 1 Rizespor 0; Besiktas 0 Istanbul BB 0; Denizlispor 1 Galatasaray 2.
Nov 2: Trabzonspor 2 Ankaraspor 1.
Nov 3: Genclerbirligi Oftas 0 Konyaspor 1; Fenerbahce 2 Besiktas 1.
Nov 4: Rizespor 1 Manisaspor 4; Bursaspor 2 Ankaragucu 1; Genclerbirligi 1 Denizlispor 2; Istanbul BB 1 Kayserispor 1; Sivasspor 4 Kasimpasa 0; Gaziantepspor 1 Galatasaray 1.
Nov 9: Denizlispor 2 Trabzonspor 0.
Nov 10: Besiktas 1 Sivasspor 2; Ankarasspor 1 Istanbul BB 1; Ankaragucu 1 Gaziantepspor 0; Manisaspor 1 Bursaspor 1; Kasimpasa 1 Genclerbirligi Oftas 3; Konyaspor 2 Rizespor 1.
Nov 11: Kayserispor 2 Fenerbahce 1; Galatasaray 3 Genclerbirligi 2.

TURKEY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Galatasaray	12	8	4	0	24	8	28
Sivasspor	12	9	1	2	23	9	28
Fenerbahce	12	6	4	2	18	12	22
Besiktas	12	6	3	3	14	11	21
Kayserispor	12	5	5	2	18	13	20
Istanbul BB	12	5	3	4	16	12	18
Denizlispor	12	5	3	4	18	15	18
Ankaragucu	12	5	3	4	14	14	18
Genc Oftas	12	5	2	5	14	12	17
Trabzonspor	12	4	4	4	14	13	16
Konyaspor	12	4	4	4	14	21	16
Gaziantep	12	4	2	6	14	16	14
Manisaspor	12	3	4	5	17	20	13
Bursaspor	12	2	6	4	12	14	12
Rizespor	12	3	1	8	11	25	10
Genclerbirligi	12	2	3	7	14	20	9
Ankaraspor	12	1	5	6	9	15	8
Kasimpasa	12	2	1	9	8	22	7

UKRAINE

Oct 19: Dynamo 1 Zakarpattya 0; Metalurh Zaporizhya 0 Chornomorets 2; Metalurh Donetsk 0 Vorskla 0.
Oct 20: Kryvbas 1 Shakhtar 0; Naftovyk 0 Zorya 0.
Oct 21: Dnipro 2 Tavriya 1; Karpaty 0 Arsenal 0; FC Kharkiv 0 Metalist 2.
Oct 26: Chornomorets 4 Karpaty 0.
Oct 27: Vorskla 0 Dynamo 1; Metalist 1 Metalurh Donetsk 1; Arsenal 0 Kryvbas 0; Zakarpattya 0 Naftovyk 0.
Oct 28: Shakhtar 2 FC Kharkiv 1; Tavriya 2 Zorya 0; Dnipro 1 Metalurh Zaporizhya 0.
Nov 2: Karpaty 0 Dnipro 1.
Nov 3: Naftovyk 2 Vorskla 0; Metalurh Donetsk 0 Shakhtar 1; FC Kharkiv 2 Arsenal 0; Dynamo 0 Metalist 1.
Nov 4: Zorya 1 Zakarpattya 0; Metalurh Zaporizhya 0 Tavriya 0; Kryvbas 3 Chornomorets 0.
Nov 9: FC Kharkiv 1 Chornomorets 1.
Nov 10: Tavriya 4 Zakarpattya 1; Karpaty 1 Metalurh Zaporizhya 3; Kryvbas 1 Dnipro 2; Metalurh Donetsk 1 Arsenal 2.
Nov 11: Naftovyk 0 Metalist 2; Dynamo 2 Shakhtar 1.

UKRAINE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shakhtar	16	13	1	2	35	11	40
Dnipro	16	12	1	3	28	15	37
Dynamo	16	10	3	3	27	15	33
Metalist	16	10	3	3	26	15	33
Chornomorets	16	7	3	6	16	14	24
Tavriya	16	7	3	6	20	22	24
Kryvbas	16	6	2	8	21	22	20
Arsenal	16	5	4	7	25	23	19
Metalurh Z	16	5	4	7	14	17	19
Metalurh D	16	3	8	5	18	19	17
FC Kharkiv	16	4	5	7	12	17	17
Zorya	15	5	2	8	13	20	17
Vorskla	15	2	8	5	9	15	14
Zakarpattya	16	3	5	8	10	22	14
Karpaty	16	3	4	9	12	25	13
Naftovyk	16	2	4	10	7	21	10

SOUTH AMERICA

SUDAMERICANA CUP

Quarter-finals

1st legs - Oct 10/25; 2nd legs - Oct 24/25/30
America (Mex) v Vasco da Gama (Bra)
2-0, 0-1 (agg 2-1)
Arsenal (Arg) v Guadalajara (Mex)
0-0, 3-1 (agg 3-1)
Defensor Sporting (Uru) v River Plate (Arg)
2-2, 0-0 (agg 2-2; River Plate on away goals)
Sao Paulo (Bra) v Millonarios (Col)
0-1, 0-2 (agg 0-3)

Semi-finals

1st legs - Nov 7/8; 2nd legs - Nov 13/14
Arsenal v River Plate
0-0, 0-0 (agg 0-0; Arsenal 4-2 on pens)
Millonarios v America
2-3, 0-2 (agg 2-5)

ARGENTINA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Friday, October 19
Lanus 2 (Valeri 16, Blanco 77)
San Martin 0

Tigre 2 (Morel 54, Rusculleda 72)
Arsenal 0

Saturday, October 20
Argentinos Juniors 1 (Penalba 60)
Racing Club 0

Colon Santa Fe 0
Gimnasia Jujuy 1 (Loeschbor 85)

Olimpo 1 (S Gonzalez 19)
Banfield 1 (Luchetti pen 41)

Rosario Central 0
Velez Sarsfield 2 (Lima 36, Rios 90)

Sunday, October 21
Boca Juniors 1 (Palermo 72)
Estudiantes 1 (Piatti 1)

Gimnasia La Plata 0
River Plate 2 (Buonanotte 26, Falcao Garcia 81)

Huracan 3 (Mendoza 40, Schiavi og 50, Franzoia 71)
Newell's Old Boys 1 (Schiavi pen 38)

Independiente 1 (Denis 37)
San Lorenzo 2 (Gonzalez pen 27, Ortiz 66)

Friday, October 26
Gimnasia La Plata 2 (Landa 11, Piatti 90)
Newell's Old Boys 0

Friday, November 2
Arsenal 1 (Calderon 85)
Rosario Central 0

San Martin 0
Banfield 1 (Cvitanich 59)

Saturday, November 3
Gimnasia Jujuy 0
Olimpo 3 (L Gonzalez 18, Araujo 56, S Gonzalez 90)

Newell's Old Boys 1 (Lucero 89)
Colon Santa Fe 1 (Garce 48)

Racing Club 0
Boca Juniors 3 (Cardozo 46, Palacio 59, Palermo pen 90)

Sunday, November 4
Estudiantes 1 (Salgueiro 35)
Gimnasia La Plata 0

Lanus 2 (Sand pen 16, Fritzler 60)
Tigre 1 (Lazzaro 33)

River Plate 1 (Belluschi 45)
Independiente 1 (Matheu 18)

San Lorenzo 1 (Bottinelli 3)
Huracan 1 (Goltz 34)

Monday, November 5
Velez Sarsfield 3 (Escudero 22, Rios 56, Silva 65)
Argentinos Juniors 0

Friday, November 9
Gimnasia La Plata 1 (Pierguidi 23)
Racing Club 3 (Cabrera 34, Lopez 43, 83)

Rosario Central 1 (Vizcarra 48)
Lanus 4 (Blanco 43, Ribonetto 58, Sand 77, Valeri 79)

Saturday, November 10
Banfield 1 (Cvitanich 72)
Gimnasia Jujuy 1 (Desvaux 50)

Colon Santa Fe 0
San Lorenzo 0

Huracan 2 (Sanchez Prette 59, 67)
River Plate 1 (Peralta 21)

Olimpo 1 (Morales 90)
Newell's Old Boys 0

Sunday, November 11
Argentinos Juniors 4 (Pereira 43, Delorte 45, Hauche 59, Penalba 75)
Arsenal 0

Boca Juniors 4 (Palermo 14, 42, Palacio 72, Gonzalez 73)
Velez Sarsfield 0

Independiente 1 (Denis 24)
Estudiantes 2 (Piatti 45, Barroso 58)

Tigre 3 (Martinez 10, Ayala 15, 49)
San Martin 0

ARGENTINA – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lanus	16	10	3	3	29	20	33
Boca Juniors	16	9	3	4	29	13	30
Tigre	16	8	4	4	24	17	28
Independiente	16	8	2	6	30	19	26
Arg Juniors	16	8	2	6	27	19	26
Banfield	16	8	2	6	19	20	26
River Plate	16	6	5	5	31	25	23
Estudiantes	16	6	5	5	22	18	23
San Lorenzo	16	6	5	5	24	25	23
Velez	16	7	2	7	20	21	23
Huracan	16	6	5	5	18	20	23
Racing Club	16	6	3	7	22	21	21
Gimnasia J	16	5	5	6	19	23	20
Colon	16	5	4	7	17	19	19
Olimpo	16	5	4	7	14	21	19
Arsenal	16	5	4	7	13	20	19
Gimnasia LP	16	5	3	8	13	19	18
Newell's OB	16	5	3	8	13	22	18
San Martin	16	4	3	9	13	23	15
Rosario	16	1	7	8	16	28	10

LEADING GOALSCORERS
17 German Denis (Independiente)
12 Jose Sand (Lanus)
11 Martin Palermo (Boca Juniors)

BOLIVIA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP
Play-offs

Oct 20: Blooming 0 Real Mamore 0.
Oct 21: La Paz 1 San Jose 2; Jorge Wilstermann 1 The Strongest 0.
Oct 24: La Paz 2 Real Mamore 2; Blooming 5 Jorge Wilstermann 0.
Oct 25: San Jose 1 The Strongest 0.
Oct 27: Jorge Wilstermann 0 La Paz 2.
Oct 28: The Strongest 0 Blooming 0; Real Mamore 3 San Jose 2.
Oct 31: San Jose 1 Real Mamore 0; Blooming 2 The Strongest 1.
Nov 1: La Paz 2 Jorge Wilstermann 1.
Nov 4: San Jose 1 Blooming 1; La Paz 2 The Strongest 1; Real Mamore 2 Jorge Wilstermann 0.
Nov 7: San Jose 2 La Paz 1.
Nov 8: Real Mamore 0 Blooming 1; The Strongest 3 Jorge Wilstermann 0.

BOLIVIA – CLOSING PLAY-OFFS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
San Jose	6	4	1	1	8	6	13
Blooming	6	3	3	0	9	2	12
La Paz*	6	3	1	2	10	8	11
Real Mamore	6	2	2	2	7	5	8
The Strongest*	6	1	1	4	5	6	5
J Wilstermann	6	1	0	5	2	14	3

**La Paz and The Strongest received one bonus point for winning their regular season group*

BRAZIL

Oct 20: Botafogo 3 Sport Recife 1; Goias 5 Fluminense 3; Palmeiras 3 Parana 0.
Oct 21: Atletico Mineiro 1 Vasco da Gama 0; Nautico 1 Corinthians 0; Sao Paulo 1 Cruzeiro 0; Atletico Paranaense 2 America 0; Figueirense 1 Santos 0; Flamengo 2 Gremio 0; Internacional 3 Juventude 0.
Oct 27: Cruzeiro 1 Atletico Paranaense 1; Fluminense 1 Atletico Mineiro 1; Santos 3 Goias 0.
Oct 28: America 0 Flamengo 1; Gremio 4 Nautico 3; Sport Recife 1 Sao Paulo 2; Corinthians 2 Figueirense 1; Vasco da Gama 2 Palmeiras 2; Juventude 1 Botafogo 1; Parana 1 Internacional 0.
Oct 31: Atletico Mineiro 0 Parana 0; Atletico Paranaense 2 Gremio 0; Figueirense 0 Fluminense 2; Flamengo 2 Corinthians 1; Goias 2 Vasco da Gama 3; Nautico 1 Santos 2; Sao Paulo 3 America 0.
Nov 1: Botafogo 4 Cruzeiro 1; Palmeiras 0 Juventude 1; Internacional 0 Sport Recife 0.

Nov 3: Fluminense 2 Nautico 1; Gremio 1 Figueirense 2; Parana 1 Goias 0.
Nov 4: America 1 Botafogo 1; Corinthians 2 Atletico Paranaense 2; Vasco da Gama 1 Internacional 2; Cruzeiro 3 Flamengo 1; Santos 2 Atletico Mineiro 2; Sport Recife 3 Palmeiras 1.
Nov 7: Juventude 2 Sao Paulo 0.
Nov 10: Botafogo 3 Parana 2; Internacional 1 Cruzeiro 0; Nautico 4 America 0.
Nov 11: Atletico Mineiro 4 Juventude 1; Atletico Paranaense 0 Sport Recife 0; Figueirense 3 Vasco da Gama 3; Flamengo 1 Santos 0; Goias 1 Corinthians 1; Sao Paulo 1 Gremio 0.
Nov 14: Palmeiras 1 Fluminense 0.

BRAZIL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sao Paulo	36	23	7	6	52	15	76
Santos	36	18	5	13	51	41	59
Flamengo	36	16	10	10	53	48	58
Palmeiras	36	16	10	10	46	42	58
Cruzeiro	36	17	6	13	71	57	57
Fluminense	36	14	13	9	50	35	55
Gremio	36	16	6	14	40	42	54
Botafogo	36	14	11	11	59	55	53
Internacional	36	14	9	13	46	41	51
At Paranaense	36	13	12	11	49	47	51
At Mineiro	36	13	10	13	56	49	49
Figueirense	36	13	10	13	54	55	49
Vasco	36	13	9	14	54	47	48
Sport Recife	36	13	9	14	52	53	48
Nautico	36	13	7	16	65	61	46
Corinthians	36	10	13	13	39	48	43
Goias	36	12	6	18	46	57	42
Parana	36	11	8	17	40	58	41
Juventude	36	10	8	18	39	61	38
America	36	4	5	27	24	74	17

CHILE

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Oct 20: Cobreloa 3 Audax Italiano 3; Dep Melipilla 3 Everton 0; Univ Catolica 1 Univ de Concepcion 1; Coquimbo Unido 1 Union Espanola 3; Dep Concepcion 0 Puerto Montt 0; Santiago Wanderers 3 Dep La Serena 2.
Oct 21: Antofagasta 0 Palestino 1; Colo Colo 2 Univ de Chile 2; Lota Schwager 0 Cobresal 2.
Oct 23: Puerto Montt 2 Dep La Serena 0; Union Espanola 1 Univ Catolica 3; O'Higgins 3 Dep Melipilla 0.
Oct 24: Palestino 6 Santiago Wanderers 0; Cobresal 2 Nublense 2; Lota Schwager 2 Dep Concepcion 1; Coquimbo Unido 0 Univ de Chile 1; Everton 1 Huachipato 3; Univ de Concepcion 2 Audax Italiano 3; Colo Colo 1 Cobreloa 1.
Oct 27: Santiago Wanderers 0 Colo Colo 4; Dep Concepcion 0 Palestino 2; Univ Catolica 3 Puerto Montt 1; Dep La Serena 1 Cobresal 1.
Oct 28: Univ de Chile 2 Lota Schwager 1; Cobreloa 2 Everton 1; Dep Melipilla 4 Coquimbo Unido 0; Huachipato 2 Univ de Concepcion 0; Nublense 4 Antofagasta 0; Audax Italiano 2 O'Higgins 0.
Oct 31: Cobresal 1 Antofagasta 1; Coquimbo Unido 0 Nublense 1; Lota Schwager 1 Santiago Wanderers 1; Palestino 1 Cobreloa 1; Puerto Montt 1 Dep Melipilla 1; Union Espanola 1 Huachipato 2; Univ de Concepcion 2 Dep La Serena 1.
Nov 1: Colo Colo 1 Audax Italiano 4; Everton 1 Dep Concepcion 3; O'Higgins 1 Univ Catolica 2.
Nov 3: Univ de Chile 3 Union Espanola 2.
Nov 4: Antofagasta 1 Puerto Montt 1; Audax Italiano 1 Dep Melipilla 1; Cobreloa 0 Univ de Concepcion 0; Dep Concepcion 3 Nublense 1; Huachipato 0 O'Higgins 0; Dep La Serena 0 Lota Schwager 2; Palestino 1 Everton 0; Santiago Wanderers 1 Cobresal 1; Univ Catolica 0 Colo Colo 1.
Nov 7: Univ de Chile 2 O'Higgins 2.
Nov 10: Coquimbo Unido 3 Dep Concepcion 1; Univ de Concepcion 1 Antofagasta 0.
Nov 11: Audax Italiano 1 Puerto Montt 1; Union Espanola 1 Santiago Wanderers 1; Colo Colo 4 Huachipato 0; Dep Melipilla 3 Univ Catolica 2; Everton 1 Univ de Chile 3; Cobresal 1 Palestino 1; Lota Schwager 3 Cobreloa 1; Nublense 3 Dep La Serena 4.

CHILE – CLOSING – GROUP 1	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Colo Colo	19	10	6	3	39	21	36
Cobresal	19	8	8	3	31	20	32
La Serena	19	6	4	9	25	32	22
Puerto Montt	19	4	6	9	15	22	18
S Wanderers	19	4	5	10	15	41	17

GROUP 2	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
U Concepcion	19	8	8	3	27	18	32
Univ Catolica	19	9	4	6	30	21	31
D Concepcion	19	7	4	8	31	38	25
Dep Melipilla	19	6	6	7	29	32	24
U Espanola	19	4	5	10	24	33	17

GROUP 3	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Audax Italiano	19	13	5	1	46	20	44
Univ de Chile	19	12	6	1	39	21	42
Cobreloa	19	7	7	5	32	27	28
Palestino	19	7	5	7	28	21	26
Everton	20	3	4	13	20	36	13

GROUP 4	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
O'Higgins	19	9	7	3	28	20	34
Huachipato	18	7	4	7	27	30	25
Nublense	19	6	5	8	30	38	23
Antofagasta	18	4	7	7	17	19	19
L Schwager	19	4	7	8	21	26	19
Coquimbo	19	4	1	14	17	35	13

COLOMBIA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP
Regular season

Oct 19: Quindio 1 Chico 5.
Oct 20: Millonarios 1 America 2; Once Caldas 2 La Equidad 1.
Oct 21: At Junior 0 Pereira 0; Cucuta 4 Indep Santa Fe 1; Dep Cali 2 At Huila 2; Dep Pasto 2 Bucaramanga 0; Indep Medellin 1 Real Cartagena 0; Tolima 2 At Nacional 1.
Oct 25: Bucaramanga 1 Millonarios 0; La Equidad 2 Quindio 1; At Nacional 0 At Junior 0; America 1 Tolima 0; At Huila 2 Cucuta 2; Chico 0 Dep Pasto 0; Pereira 2 Indep Medellin 0; Indep Santa Fe 0 Once Caldas 4.
Oct 26: Real Cartagena 0 Dep Cali 2.
Oct 31: At Junior 1 America 3; At Nacional 2 Pereira 0; Cucuta 1 Real Cartagena 0; Quindio 3 Indep Santa Fe 0; Tolima 3 Bucaramanga 1; Dep Cali 0 Indep Medellin 1; Millonarios 2 Chico 1; Once Caldas 2 At Huila 2.
Nov 1: Dep Pasto 4 La Equidad 1.
Nov 3: America 1 At Nacional 1; Chico 1 Tolima 0.
Nov 4: Bucaramanga 2 At Junior 1; At Huila 0 Quindio 1; Pereira 1 Dep Cali 0; Indep Medellin 1 Cucuta 1; Indep Santa Fe 0 Dep Pasto 0; La Equidad 1 Millonarios 1; Real Cartagena 1 Once Caldas 1.
Nov 7: America 2 Pereira 0; At Junior 0 Chico 0; At Nacional 1 Bucaramanga 0; Cucuta 1 Dep Cali 1; Quindio 1 Real Cartagena 0; Tolima 2 La Equidad 1; Dep Pasto 1 At Huila 0; Once Caldas 1 Indep Medellin 0.
Nov 8: Millonarios 2 Indep Santa Fe 2.
Nov 10: At Huila 1 Millonarios 1.
Nov 11: Bucaramanga 1 America 0; Chico 1 At Nacional 2; Dep Cali 1 Once Caldas 0; Pereira 2 Cucuta 2; Indep Medellin 3 Quindio 4; Indep Santa Fe 1 Tolima 1; La Equidad 5 At Junior 0; Real Cartagena 3 Dep Pasto 3.

COLOMBIA – CLOSING: REGULAR – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
At Nacional	18	11	5	2	28	12	38
La Equidad	18	10	4	4	27	18	34
America	18	10	4	4	24	15	34
Tolima	18	10	3	5	26	17	33
Cucuta	18	9	5	4	30	19	32
Dep Pasto	18	8	6	4	27	16	30
Once Caldas	18	8	5	5	29	22	29
Chico	18	7	6	5	20	18	27
Quindio	18	8	2	8	29	27	26
Ind Medellin	18	8	1	9	22	25	25
Millonarios	18	5	5	8	18	27	20
At Junior	18	5	3	10	17	28	18
Dep Cali	18	3	9	6	18	20	18
Bucaramanga	18	5	2	11	20	28	17
At Huila	18	3	8	7	17	27	17
Pereira	18	3	8	7	15	25	17
Cartagena	18	3	5	10	16	25	14
Ind Santa Fe	18	2	7	9	16	30	13

Top eight qualify for championship play-offs

ECUADOR

OVERALL CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY-OFFS

Oct 19: Dep Cuenca 2 Dep Quito 1.
Oct 21: LDU Quito 1 Olmedo 0; El Nacional 0 Dep Azogues 2.
Oct 27: Dep Azogues 1 Dep Cuenca 1.
Oct 28: Dep Quito 1 LDU Quito 3; Olmedo 1 El Nacional 1.
Oct 31: Dep Cuenca 0 Olmedo 0; Dep Quito 1 Dep Azogues 1; El Nacional 0 LDU Quito 2.
Nov 4: El Nacional 3 Dep Quito 1; LDU Quito 1 Dep Cuenca 1; Olmedo 1 Dep Azogues 0.
Nov 9: Dep Cuenca 3 El Nacional 1.
Nov 10: Dep Azogues 0 LDU Quito 1.
Nov 11: Dep Quito 0 Olmedo 2.

ECUADOR – CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY-OFFS	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
LDU Quito	5	4	1	0	8	2	17 [4]
Dep Cuenca	5	2	3	0	7	4	11 [2]
Olmedo	5	2	2	1	4	2	11 [3]
El Nacional	5	1	1	3	5	9	6 [2]
Azogues	5	1	2	2	4	4	5
Dep Quito	5	0	1	4	4	11	2 [1]

Figures in brackets are bonus points from opening and closing championships

PARAGUAY

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Oct 19: Sol de America 0 Libertad 1.
Oct 20: Guarani 2 12 de Octubre 2; Sportivo Luqueno 2 3 de Febrero 1; Cerro Porteno 4 2 de Mayo 0; Tacuary 0 Sportivo Trinidense 0.
Oct 21: Olimpia 2 Nacional 3.
Oct 24: Nacional 3 Sol de America 1; Sportivo Luqueno 1 Guarani 1; 12 de Octubre 3 Tacuary 0; Sportivo Trinidense 0 Cerro Porteno 1; 3 de Febrero 1 Libertad 2; 2 de Mayo 1 Olimpia 3.
Oct 27: Tacuary 4 Sportivo Luqueno 1.
Oct 28: Sol de America 6 2 de Mayo 0; Guarani 1 3 de Febrero 1; Cerro Porteno 4 12 de Octubre 1; Olimpia 2 Sportivo Trinidense 1; Libertad 2 Nacional 1.
Nov 2: 2 de Mayo 1 Libertad 3.
Nov 3: 12 de Octubre 0 Olimpia 3; 3 de Febrero 1 Nacional 3; Guarani 1 Tacuary 0; Sportivo Luqueno 2 Cerro Porteno 1; Sportivo Trinidense 0 Sol de America 0.
Nov 7: Cerro Porteno 4 Guarani 1; Libertad 1 Sportivo Trinidense 0; Nacional 1 2 de Mayo 0; Olimpia 5 Sportivo Luqueno 1; Sol de America 1 12 de Octubre 0; Tacuary 2 3 de Febrero 0.
Nov 10: Guarani 2 Olimpia 0.
Nov 11: 12 de Octubre 0 Libertad 3; 3 de Febrero 2 2 de Mayo 1; Sportivo Luqueno 2 Sol de America 1; Tacuary 3 Cerro Porteno 3; Sportivo Trinidense 1 Nacional 1.

PARAGUAY – CLOSING	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Libertad	19	15	3	1	31	13	48
Cerro Porteno	19	13	3	3	45	17	42
Olimpia	19	11	4	4	30	17	37
Nacional	19	8	5	6	32	26	29
Sol America	19	7	6	6	26	20	27
Tacuary	19	6	6	7	24	25	24
Guarani	19	6	5	8	21	23	23
12 de Octubre	19	6	3	10	18	26	21
Trinidense	19	4	8	7	11	15	20
Luqueno	19	5	3	11	20	34	18
3 de Febrero	19	4	4	11	19	36	16
2 de Mayo	19	2	4	13	12	37	10

PERU

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Oct 19: Alianza Atletico 1 Dep Municipal 0; Sport Boys 2 Coronel Bolognesi 2.
Oct 20: Sport Ancash 1 Cienciano 0.
Oct 23: Universidad SMP 1 Sporting Cristal 1; Universitario 2 Melgar 2.
Oct 24: Total Clean 2 Alianza Lima 0.
Oct 27: Cienciano 4 Universidad SMP 0; Coronel Bolognesi 1 Alianza Atletico 0; Sporting Cristal 1 Universitario 0.
Oct 28: Melgar 2 Total Clean 2; Alianza Lima 3 Sport Ancash 0.
Oct 31: Universidad SMP 0 Alianza Lima 0; Total Clean 1 Coronel Bolognesi 0; Universitario 2 Dep Municipal 1.
Nov 1: Sport Ancash 0 Melgar 2; Sport Boys 0 Alianza Atletico 0; Sporting Cristal 1 Cienciano 0.
Nov 4: Alianza Atletico 0 Universitario 0; Alianza Lima 0 Sporting Cristal 1; Coronel Bolognesi 0 Universidad SMP 1; Cienciano 3 Total Clean 1; Dep Municipal 2 Sport Ancash 0.
Nov 6: Melgar 2 Sport Boys 0.
Nov 7: Universitario 1 Alianza Lima 3.
Nov 10: Cienciano 3 Alianza Lima 0; Universidad SMP 1 Melgar 0.
Nov 11: Sport Ancash 3 Alianza Atletico 2; Sporting Cristal 1 Coronel Bolognesi 0; Total Clean 4 Dep Municipal 1; Universitario 3 Sport Boys 1.

PERU – CLOSING	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cienciano	18	9	2	7	30	21	29
C Bolognesi	18	8	5	5	18	10	29
Universitario	18	7	7	4	22	19	28
S Cristal	18	7	5	6	17	19	26
Al Lima	18	7	5	6	18	21	26
Sport Ancash	18	7	4	7	22	25	25
Melgar	18	5	8	5	17	14	23
Univ SMP	18	6	5	7	20	19	23
Al Atletico	18	5	7	6	16	17	22
Total Clean	18	6	4	8	21	24	22
D Municipal	18	6	2	9	16	24	20
Sport Boys	17	3	8	6	20	24	17

URUGUAY

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Oct 6: Danubio 3 Penarol 1 (abandoned in 62nd minute; result stood).
Oct 20: Central Espanol 3 River Plate 2; Nacional 0 Danubio 2; Tacuarembo 1 Rampla Juniors 0.
Oct 21: Miramar Misiones 1 Bella Vista 0; Fenix 0 Juventud 0; Penarol 4 Liverpool 0; Progreso 1 Cerro 1; Wanderers 1 Defensor 2.
Oct 27: Danubio 2 Bella Vista 2; Tacuarembo 3 Central Espanol 3.
Oct 28: Rampla Juniors 2 Juventud 1; Cerro 2 Miramar Misiones 0; Liverpool 4 Fenix 0; Nacional 3 River Plate 1; Progreso 2 Wanderers 3.
Nov 3: Bella Vista 0 River Plate 1; Cerro 0 Penarol 0.
Nov 4: Rampla Juniors 0 Danubio 0; Fenix 1 Central Espanol 2; Nacional 2 Liverpool 0; Progreso 2 Tacuarembo 1; Wanderers 2 Miramar Misiones 1; Defensor 2 Juventud 0.
Nov 7: Penarol 0 Defensor 2.
Nov 10: Miramar Misiones 0 Fenix 1; Danubio 1 Cerro 2; Tacuarembo 1 Nacional 4.
Nov 11: Juventud 1 Wanderers 1; Central Espanol 2 Bella Vista 0; Penarol 0 Progreso 3; River Plate 5 Defensor 1; Liverpool 0 Rampla Juniors 1.

URUGUAY – OPENING	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Defensor	12	8	2	2	20	8	26
Rampla Jnrs	12	8	2	2	15	7	26
Danubio	12	6	4	2	19	10	22
River Plate	12	6	2	4	31	22	20
Wanderers	12	6	2	4	20	17	20
Nacional	12	5	4	3	16	10	19
Cerro	12	4	6	2	13	12	18
Juventud	12	3	6	3	10	9	15
Penarol	12	4	3	5	17	18	15
Fenix	12	3	6	3	10	12	15
Tacuarembo	12	4	3	5	14	18	15
C Espanol	12	4	3	5	17	22	15
Liverpool	12	3	2	7	16	19	11
M Misiones	12	3	1	8	6	15	10
Progreso	12	3	1	8	11	26	10
Bella Vista	12	1	3	8	13	23	6

VENEZUELA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Oct 20: Llaneros 1 Dep Tachira 1.
Oct 21: Mineros 6 Estrella Roja 0; Caracas 2 El Vigia 0; Estudiantes 2 Guaros 1; Union Lara 1 Monagas 3; Zamora 1 Carabobo 2; Anzoategui 4 Trujillanos 0; Aragua 2 Portuguesa 3; UA Maracaibo 0 Dep Italia 0.
Oct 27: Dep Italia 1 Union Lara 0.
Oct 28: El Vigia 0 Llaneros 0; Dep Tachira 0 Anzoategui 0; Estrella Roja 1 Caracas 1; Monagas 1 Aragua 0; Portuguesa 0 Mineros 3; Trujillanos 1 Estudiantes 0; Guaros 0 Zamora 3.
Oct 31: Portuguesa 2 Dep Tachira 2.
Nov 3: Llaneros 5 Estrella Roja 1.
Nov 4: Mineros 1 Monagas 1; Anzoategui 1 El Vigia 0; Aragua 1 Dep Italia 0; Caracas 3 Portuguesa 1; Estudiantes 0 Dep Tachira 1; UA Maracaibo 2 Guaros 1; Union Lara 1 Carabobo 1; Zamora 3 Trujillanos 0.
Nov 11: El Vigia 2 Estudiantes 3; Dep Italia 2 Mineros 3; Dep Tachira 0 Zamora 0; Estrella Roja 1 Anzoategui 3; Guaros 2 Union Lara 1; Monagas 1 Caracas 0; Portuguesa 1 Llaneros 0; Carabobo 0 Aragua 2; Trujillanos 1 UA Maracaibo 1.

VENEZUELA – OPENING	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Caracas	13	8	4	1	21	9	28
Anzoategui	13	8	2	3	26	9	26
Monagas	13	6	4	3	25	16	22
UA Maracaibo	12	5	6	1	19	17	21
Mineros	13	5	5	3	24	16	20
Portuguesa	13	6	2	5	14	17	20
Dep Tachira	13	4	6	3	15	9	18
Aragua	13	5	3	5	25	25	18
Trujillanos	13	5	3	5	16	22	18
Zamora	13	4	5	4	15	9	17
Llaneros	13	4	5	4	17	14	17
Guaros	13	5	2	6	19	21	17
Estudiantes	13	4	3	6	18	24	15
Dep Italia	13	3	5	5	11	13	14
El Vigia	13	4	1	8	11	18	13
Estrella Roja	13	3	3	7	17	35	12
Carabobo	12	3	2	7	9	18	11
Union Lara	13	1	5	7	16	26	8

CENTRAL & NORTH AMERICA

MEXICO

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP
League stage

Oct 19: Veracruz 3 Monterrey 1.
Oct 20: Cruz Azul 1 Jaguares 1; San Luis 3 Pumas UNAM 2; Guadalajara 1 Atlante 1; Pachuca 1 America 2; Tigres 4 Tecos UAG 0.
Oct 21: Necaxa 2 Atlas 4; Toluca 2 Puebla 0; Santos 3 Morelia 2.
Oct 26: Tecos UAG 2 San Luis 3.
Oct 27: Jaguares 0 Toluca 0; Monterrey 3 Pachuca 1; Morelia 1 Tigres 0; Atlante 0 Necaxa 2; Atlas 2 Santos 5.
Oct 28: Puebla 0 Veracruz 0; Pumas UNAM 1 Cruz Azul 2; America 2 Guadalajara 1.
Oct 31: Cruz Azul 1 Tecos UAG 2; Veracruz 1 Jaguares 3; Necaxa 2 Santos 3; Toluca 0 Pumas UNAM 0; Pachuca 0 Puebla 0; Guadalajara 1 Monterrey 0; San Luis 2 Morelia 1; Tigres 3 Atlas 2; Atlante 2 America 1.
Nov 3: Jaguares 0 Pachuca 2; Monterrey 1 Atlante 1; Tecos UAG 2 Toluca 3; Morelia 2 Cruz Azul 1; Atlas 1 San Luis 1.
Nov 4: Pumas UNAM 8 Veracruz 0; America 1 Necaxa 0; Puebla 0 Guadalajara 3; Santos 0 Tigres 0.
Nov 9: Veracruz 3 Tecos UAG 2.
Nov 10: Cruz Azul 2 Atlas 0; Monterrey 0 America 1; San Luis 2 Santos 2; Guadalajara 5 Jaguares 4; Atlante 4 Puebla 0.
Nov 11: Toluca 2 Morelia 0; Pachuca 1 Pumas UNAM 1; Necaxa 1 Tigres 0.

MEXICO – OPENING: GROUP 1 – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Toluca	17	10	4	3	27	16	34
Pumas UNAM	17	6	6	5	32	19	24
Pachuca	17	7	3	7	26	23	24
Jaguares	17	3	9	5	22	28	18
Puebla	17	4	5	8	16	24	17
Tecos UAG	17	5	2	10	24	38	17

GROUP 2 – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Santos	17	11	5	1	40	22	38
Atlante	17	9	6	2	32	19	33
America	17	7	5	5	26	22	26
Veracruz	17	5	3	9	20	35	18
Monterrey	17	3	5	9	18	25	14
Atlas	17	3	3	11	23	33	12

GROUP 3 – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guadalajara	17	9	4	4	28	16	31
San Luis	17	8	5	4	31	30	29
Cruz Azul	17	7	4	6	27	22	25
Morelia	17	6	4	7	20	25	22
Necaxa	17	5	5	7	23	32	20
Tigres	17	4	4	9	16	22	16

Top two in each group qualified automatically for championship quarter-finals. The three third-placed sides and the fourth-placed side with most points entered play-offs to determine the last two quarter-finalists

UNITED STATES

League stage

Oct 20: Colorado Rapids 0 Real Salt Lake 1; FC Dallas 0 Kansas City Wizards 2; DC United 2 Columbus Crew 3; Toronto FC 2 New England Revolution 2; Chivas USA 0 Houston Dynamo 0.
Oct 21: Chicago Fire 1 Los Angeles Galaxy 0.

USA – EASTERN CONFERENCE – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
DC United	30	16	7	7	56	34	55
New England	30	14	8	8	51	43	50
New York	30	12	7	11	47	45	43
Chicago Fire	30	10	10	10	31	36	40
Kansas City	30	11	7	12	45	45	40
Columbus	30	9	10	11	39	44	37
Toronto FC	30	6	7	17	25	49	25

WESTERN CONFERENCE – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chivas USA	30	15	8	7	46	28	53
Houston	30	15	7	8	43	23	52
FC Dallas	30	13	5	12	37	44	44
Colorado	30	9	8	13	29	34	35
LA Galaxy	30	9	7	14	38	48	34
Real Salt Lake	30	6	9	15	31	45	27

Top two in each conference and the other four teams with most points from either conference qualified for championship play-offs

TOP GOALSCORERS

20 Luciano Emilio (DC United)
19 Juan Pablo Angel (New York Red Bulls)
15 Eddie Johnson (Kansas City Wizards)
15 Taylor Twellman (New England Revolution)

Quarter-finals

1st legs - Oct 25/27; 2nd legs - Nov 1/2/3
Chicago Fire v DC United
1-0, 2-2 (agg 3-2)
FC Dallas v Houston Dynamo
1-0, 1-4 (agg 2-4)
Kansas City Wizards v Chivas USA
1-0, 0-0 (agg 1-0)
New York Red Bulls v New England Revolution
0-0, 0-1 (agg 0-1)

Semi-finals*

Nov 8: New England Revolution 1 Chicago Fire 0.
Nov 10: Houston Dynamo 2 Kansas City Wizards 0.
**Single-leg ties*

AFRICA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Final, 1st leg

Oct 27
Etoile Sahel (Tun) 0
Al Ahly (Egy) 0

Final, 2nd leg

Nov 9
Al Ahly 1 (Al-Nahhas 50)
Etoile Sahel 3 (Gharbi 45, Chermiti 90, Nary 90)
HT: 0-1
Sent off: Al-Nahhas (Al Ahly) 60min
Etoile Sahel 3-1 on agg

CONFEDERATION CUP

Final, 1st leg

Nov 3
Al Merreikh (Sud) 2 (Paulinho Roberto 54, Agab pen 78)
CS Sfaxien (Tun) 4 (Mbele 1, Tana og 5, Kouassi 18, 60)
HT: 0-3

2nd leg - Nov 24

ASIA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Semi-finals

1st legs - Oct 3; 2nd legs - Oct 24
Sepahan (Irn) v Al Wahda (UAE)
3-1, 0-0 (agg 3-1)
Songnam Ilhwa (SKo) v Urawa Reds (Jap)
2-2, 2-2 (aet) (agg 4-4; Urawa Reds 5-3 on pens)

Final, 1st leg

Nov 7
Sepahan 1 (Karimi 47)
Urawa Reds 1 (Robson Ponte 45)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Bashir
Sepahan: Mohammadi - Aghily, Bengar, Mujiri, Navidkia, Akbari (Hamidi 46), Al-Hail, Bayat (Lovinian 46), Hajysafi, Karimi (Kazemi 68), Mohammed.
Urawa Reds: Tsuzuki - Tsuboi, Nene, Robson Ponte, Suzuki, Hirakawa, Hasebe, Horinouchi, Abe, Nagai, Washington.

Final, 2nd leg

Nov 14
Urawa Reds 2 (Nagai 22, Abe 71)
Sepahan 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 59,034. **Ref:** Irmatov
Urawa Reds 3-1 on agg
Urawa Reds: Tsuzuki - Tsuboi, Tulio Tanaka, Robson Ponte (Uchidate 81), Suzuki, Hirakawa, Hasebe, Horinouchi, Abe, Nagai (Tatsuya Tanaka 86), Washington (Okano 90).
Sepahan: Mohammadi - Aghily, Bengar, Mujiri, Navidkia, Al-Hail, Hamidi (Papi 46), Bayat (Kazemi 60), Lovinian, Hajysafi, Mohammed (Karimi 30).

AFC CUP

Semi-finals

1st legs - Oct 2/3; 2nd legs - Oct 22/23
Al Faisaly (Jor) v Al Wihdat (Jor)
1-1, 2-1 (agg 3-2)
Shabab Al Ordun (Jor) v Al Nijmeh (Leb)
1-0, 0-0 (agg 1-0)

Final, 1st leg

Nov 2
Al Faisaly 0
Shabab Al Ordun 1 (Al-Saify 52)
HT: 0-0

Final, 2nd leg

Nov 9
Shabab Al Ordun 1 (Aburomeh 43)
Al Faisaly 1 (Al-Shboul 13)
HT: 1-1
Shabab Al Ordun 2-1 on agg

CHINA

Oct 31: Qingdao 1 Wuhan 0; Xian 0 Beijing 0; Liaoning 1 Shenzhen 1; Zhejiang 2 Xiamen 1; Shenyang 2 Henan 1; Shanghai 2 Changchun 2.
Nov 1: Shandong 1 Dalian 1.
Nov 4: Zhejiang 1 Dalian 1; Beijing 2 Tianjin 0; Xiamen 1 Liaoning 3; Henan 3 Changchun 2; Shanghai 1 Xian 1; Shenzhen 2 Qingdao 2; Wuhan 0 Shenyang 0.
Nov 10: Xian 0 Henan 0; Qingdao 2 Xiamen 0; Liaoning 2 Dalian 1; Tianjin 0 Shanghai 0; Shandong 1 Zhejiang 1; Changchun 4 Wuhan 0; Shenyang 2 Shenzhen 0.
Nov 14: Shenzhen 1 Changchun 4; Wuhan 2 Xian 1; Xiamen 0 Shenyang 0; Zhejiang 0 Liaoning 0; Henan 0 Tianjin 0; Dalian 3 Qingdao 2; Beijing 1 Shandong 0.

CHINA – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Changchun	28	16	7	5	48	25	55
Beijing	28	15	9	4	45	19	54
Shandong	28	14	6	8	53	29	48
Shanghai	28	12	10	6	35	29	46
Tianjin	28	12	8	8	31	22	44
Dalian	28	11	11	6	36	31	44
Wuhan	28	11	7	10	29	31	40
Qingdao	28	10	6	12	36	42	36
Liaoning	28	9	8	11	26	36	35
Shenyang	28	8	10	10	17	24	34
Zhejiang	28	6	10	12	25	35	28
Henan	28	5	12	11	20	28	27
Xian	28	4	14	10	24	29	26
Shenzhen	28	5	10	13	21	42	25
Xiamen	28	4	8	16	22	46	20

JAPAN

Oct 20: Omiya Ardija 1 Sanfrecce Hiroshima 0; Jubilo Iwata 1 Kashima Antlers 3; Kawasaki Frontale 4 Albirex Niigata 3; Vissel Kobe 3 Yokohama FC 0; Yokohama F Marinos 0 Shimizu S-Pulse 2: JEF United 2 Urawa Reds 4; Oita Trinita 2 Kashiwa Reysol 1.
Oct 21: Gamba Osaka 5 Ventforet Kofu 0; Nagoya Grampus Eight 0 FC Tokyo 1.
Oct 27: Sanfrecce Hiroshima 2 JEF United 2; Yokohama FC 0 Omiya Ardija 1; Kashiwa Reysol 1 Vissel Kobe 3; Albirex Niigata 1 Jubilo Iwata 1; Kashima Antlers 3 Oita Trinita 0; Ventforet Kofu 1 Yokohama F Marinos 1; Shimizu S-Pulse 3 Gamba Osaka 1.
Oct 28: FC Tokyo 0 Kawasaki Frontale 7; Urawa Reds 0 Nagoya Grampus Eight 0.
Nov 10: Albirex Niigata 2 FC Tokyo 1; Yokohama F Marinos 2 Kashima Antlers 3; Kashiwa Reysol 1 Yokohama FC 1; Vissel Kobe 4 Ventforet Kofu 1; Gamba Osaka 2 JEF United 0; Nagoya Grampus Eight 0 Jubilo Iwata 0.
Nov 11: Shimizu S-Pulse 3 Sanfrecce Hiroshima 1; Kawasaki Frontale 1 Urawa Reds 1; Omiya Ardija 1 Oita Trinita 2.

JAPAN	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Urawa Reds	31	20	9	2	55	26	69
Gamba Osaka	31	19	7	5	67	33	64
Kashima	31	19	6	6	55	36	63
Shimizu SP	31	18	5	8	51	31	59
Albirex	31	14	6	11	46	44	48
Kawasaki	31	12	11	8	59	46	47
Kashiwa	31	13	8	10	41	30	47
Jubilo Iwata	31	14	4	13	49	51	46
Vissel Kobe	31	13	5	13	56	46	44
Yokohama FM	31	12	7	12	50	33	43
JEF United	31	12	5	14	47	49	41
FC Tokyo	31	13	2	16	46	55	41
Grampus Eight	31	11	5	15	38	44	38
Oita Trinita	31	7	9	15	21	38	30
Omiya Ardija	31	7	9	15	21	38	30
Sanfrecce	31	8	6	17	41	65	30
Ventforet	31	7	5	19	32	62	26
Yokohama FC	31	3	3	25	18	64	12

SOUTH KOREA

CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY-OFFS
1st stage

Oct 20: Gyeongnam 1 Pohang 1 (Pohang 4-3 on pens).
Oct 21: Ulsan 2 Daejeon 0.

2nd stage

Oct 28: Ulsan 1 Pohang 2.

3rd stage

Oct 31: Suwon* 0 Pohang 1.
**Suwon received bye to third stage having finished runners-up in league stage*

Pohang qualified for Final, to which league stage winners Songnam Ilhwa received a bye

Final, 1st leg

Nov 4
Pohang 3 (Park Won-jae 30, Koh Gi-goo 74, Lee Kwang-jae 75)
Songnam 1 (Jang Hak-young 90)
HT: 1-0

Final, 2nd leg

Nov 11
Songnam 0
Pohang 1 (Cleber 43)
HT: 0-1
Pohang 4-1 on agg

The impact sub: Julio Cruz

Internazionale coach Roberto Mancini on Julio Cruz

● ATTITUDE
"He's the ultimate professional. He naturally wants to start but if that's not the case, he prepares himself to come off the bench at some point and make an impact then. He simply gets on with his job, and you have to say he does it very well. He has the greatest respect for everybody here. Complaining isn't his style."

● INTELLIGENCE
"You can't buy his experience, the flair he has to move ahead of a marker or to gamble on where he thinks the ball will end up."

● PERSONALITY
"One of his most important traits is his calmness under pressure. He doesn't allow himself to become carried away by the match situation. Julio is a patient type. Like all good strikers he has this strong inner belief that if he can get on the end of a scoring opportunity, he will put it away. I see him as a very loyal guy. Inter have become the team of his heart, he really does identify with this club and will always go the extra mile for us."

● ABILITY
"His strikerate is one to be admired, and he seems to improve with age. Being able to score goals when required is a rare gift. He is a fine focal point for the attack. He's physically strong, he can hold the ball up intelligently. His strength in the air gives us another welcome dimension."

WHAT THEY SAID

The Inter forward was judged best by his fellow players

ULRICH RAME (BORDEAUX)
"Against a tiring defence, the trickery and vitality of Robinho [Real Madrid] are lethal."

KIM KALLSTROM (LYON)
"Maybe it's because Arjen Robben [Real Madrid] is so upset about being on the bench but when he is brought on he's absolutely buzzing."

FABIO GROSSO (above) (LYON)
"Julio Cruz [Internazionale] is adaptable and importantly does not sulk about starting on the bench. He has this self-belief that he will get his chance to come on and that he will score."

YILDIRAY BASTURK (above) (STUTTGART)
"Luis Figo [Internazionale] might not have the legs these days, but his intelligence and experience of pressure situations count for much more."

GREGORY TAFFOREAU (LILLE)
"For me the best impact players are the older guys, those who can read a game well and don't get carried away in difficult situations. I'd go for someone like Hernan Crespo [Internazionale], who is just a natural finisher."

LORIK CANA (MARSEILLE)
"You want a sub with pride who wants to prove his coach wrong. Fred [Lyon] has lots of attitude and he explodes when coming on."

MARTIN DEMICHELIS (BAYERN MUNICH)
"At the last World Cup David Odonkor [Real Betis] did a lot of damage as a substitute for Germany. He was dying to get on the pitch and make things happen with his pace and commitment."

MARCELL JANSEN (above) (BAYERN MUNICH)
"Peter Crouch [Liverpool] is a big Plan B. With his great height, he gives defenders a new major problem to solve. It's not subtle but it's effective."

TOMAS UJFALUSI (FIORENTINA)
"What can you say about Julio Cruz? He appears in the second half and always scores. It's uncanny how he does it."

JAROSLAV PLASIL (OSASUNA)
"Pablo Aimar [Zaragoza] is a clever and cool player and straight away adjusts to the rhythm of a game."

THE VOTES
2...Cruz
1...Aimar, Crespo, Crouch, Figo, Fred, Odonkor, Robben, Robinho

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